

REPORT  
OF  
THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
*TWENTY-FIRST SESSION*  
OF THE  
National Liberal Federation of India  
HELD AT ALLAHABAD  
*On December 27, 28 and 29, 1939*



PRINTED BY KRISHNA RAM MEHTA AT THE LEADER PRESS, LEADER BUILDINGS,  
LEADER ROAD, AND PUBLISHED BY THE SECRETARY,  
RECEPTION COMMITTEE

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# Indian National Liberal Federation.

## TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL SESSION AT ALLAHABAD.

*December 27, 28 and 29, 1939*

The twenty first session of the National Liberal Federation of India opened on the afternoon of Thursday, December 27, 1939, in Mayo Hall, Allahabad, amidst very impressive scenes. A large and distinguished assemblage was present and the hall was packed to its capacity by the delegates, members of the reception committee and visitors including a number of Indian ladies. The hall and its approaches were artistically decorated and many photographs of national leaders who rendered yeoman services to the country and inspiring and patriotic mottoes from their writings and speeches adorned the walls.

Dr R P Paranjpye, the president elect, on his arrival at the portico, was received by Pandit Iqbal Naram Gurtu, chairman of the reception committee, and the secretaries and led to the *dais* in the hall in a procession which included prominent Liberal leaders and some ex presidents of the Federation. The entire audience stood up as the presidential procession entered and cheered the president elect.

Along with the president elect and the chairman of the reception committee were seated on the *dais* the right hon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Yajneswar and Lady Chintamani, Mr J N Basu, the hon Mr Prakash Naram Sapru, Sri Maharaj Singh, Rai Bahadur Di Kanhaiya Lal, ex judge of Allahabad High Court, Mr and Mrs Chandavarkar, Mrs Kabe of Indore, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Rai Bahadur Kunwar Guru Naram, Di Narayan Prasad Asthana, advocate general, Mr Barucha and Mr M D Altekar.

The proceedings commenced shortly after 1.45 p.m. with devotional songs by the Prayag Panchkoshi Sankirtan Samiti and the Vande Mataram sung by a batch of girls belonging to the family of the late Lala Wazir Sahni (and students of Prayag Sangit Samiti).

### CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

PANDIT IQBAL NARAM GURTU, chairman of the reception committee, delivered the following speech —

BROTHER DELEGATES LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—On behalf of the reception committee of the National Liberal Federation of India I beg to offer you a cordial welcome to this sacred city of Allahabad on the occasion of the 21st session of the Federation.

The United Provinces Liberal Association mourns the untimely death of a valuable colleague, Kumaar Rajendra Singh, who was a staunch Liberal. He held the high office of Minister in these provinces which he had to resign after some time because he courageously stood up for the position taken up by the Liberal Party with regard to the Simon Commission.

### The European Situation

We are meeting this year at a time of great political crisis both national and international. Exactly after a quarter of a century the war clouds have

again burst in their full fury and submerged Europe in a deluge of bloodshed, cruelty and hatred. All efforts to substitute arbitration for war ultimately failed and the gallant Polish nation has been ruthlessly trodden under foot. Our hearts go out to the Poles in their terrible misfortune and in the wanton destruction of their fair country. Through their suffering they have undoubtedly risen in the estimation of the civilized world and the aggressors stand condemned before the bar of public opinion. The forces of aggression and cruelty are however active not only in Europe but they have been equally active in Asia. Our loving thoughts go to China which is the unhappy victim of the greed of an ambitious neighbour.

### The Position in India

Events are moving in Europe with such rapidity that it is difficult to foresee the further developments of the present troubles in other parts of the world. Our position in India is by no means free from anxiety and while we are not to take a panicky view of the situation we have at the same time not to be so over-confident as to consider ourselves absolutely safe and invulnerable. Some of our leaders who claim to understand the international situation much better have proclaimed that there can be no danger to India. They have been exhorting their admiring followers to take active steps to bring about a condition of affairs which could hardly be distinguished from revolution. The course suggested by them may or may not bring freedom nearer but it is certain to let loose the dark forces of anarchy, chaos and confusion and our helpless position in matters of defence may well make us an easy prey to the big and powerful nations in a world where the law of the jungle is holding supreme. It is easy to characterize this view as the diseased fancy of timid and craven hearts suffering from an inferiority complex but bravado and foolhardiness which refuse to look at the realities of the situation is very different from courage and far sightedness.

Gentlemen under the pressure of its left wing the Congress has formulated its recent demands in a manner which has created an unfortunate situation. It is not necessary for me to recount all the facts which have led to the present deadlock, when after the resignation of the Congress ministries the majority of the Indian provinces are being administered directly by the Governors with the help of Advisers under Section 93 of the Government of India Act. The Congress is evidently going to continue its non-cooperation in different degrees of intensity in future as the needs of the moment as understood by it may require, till its demands are fully conceded. There is no doubt that if the present condition of uncertainty and tension is allowed to continue long, it will lead to developments which would neither facilitate the growth of ordered freedom in India nor would be helpful to Britain at a time when it is engaged in a life and death struggle. Right thinking people in both countries would certainly not like the crisis to be precipitated. A satisfactory solution of the present tangle is only possible when the people of both the countries are prepared to face facts.

### India's demand

Ladies and gentlemen, during the last Great War slogans of 'protection of the weaker nations' and of 'self-determination for every country' were constantly raised. But in India the Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar massacre

immediately followed the close of the war. The policy of Great Britain in its relation to India in the vital matters of finance, trade and defence has not undergone any material change. The rejection by the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the proposals contained in the memorandum submitted to it by the Indian delegates to the Round Table Conference, which were modest in their character and upon which they were unanimously agreed, is still fresh in our mind. It is extremely difficult to reconcile such treatment with the aims that were so loudly professed a quarter of a century ago. With the sad and cruel experience of the past, Indians could not be expected to have developed by a psychology which would readily accept the recent statements of the British Government and its agents entirely at their face value. It is quite legitimate to enquire whether the declared aims and intentions of Great Britain relate only to Europe or whether India too has any place in the picture of the future which is to ensure the laying of a foundation of a better international system. India was obviously not in a position to discuss these vital questions behind the scenes by means of political despatches or through diplomatic negotiations conducted by its agents. It could thus have neither avoided publicity nor sat silent. Gentlemen, it rests with the British Government to create such psychological conditions in India as would produce a genuine enthusiasm in the hearts of the Indian people to give their full and spontaneous support to England in the present grim struggle against the spirit of lawlessness and ruthless aggression.

### The Viceroy's Declaration

Assurances have no doubt been given in the Viceroy's Declaration and in the statements subsequently made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament that the goal of British policy is the attainment of Dominion Status by India of the same character as is enjoyed by the self governing dominions and as is contemplated by the Statute of Westminster. But we all know how the assurances given on behalf of His Majesty's Government by Lord Halifax when he was Viceroy were sought to be explained away when the new Government of India Act was brought on the Statute Book. Our past experience since the time of the Charter Act of 1833 and the proclamation of 1858 has taught us the painful lesson that words of promise uttered to the ear can be conveniently broken to the heart. The prospect of Dominion Status at some indefinite future period cannot and will not satisfy any shade of public opinion in India today. The attainment of such status by India within definite period and the framing of a constitution on a basis which will give it the substance of independence within that period is what India wants. The period of transition must be energetically worked up to that well defined end by a well thought out plan of automatic advance. The new spirit moving India today will not and cannot reconcile itself to the principle of advance by indefinite and slow stages, the time for further advance and the extent of each advance being decided by the British Parliament alone after a prolonged and close enquiry. The claim repeatedly urged that the manner and the measure of every advance towards self government in India was to be determined solely by the British Parliament has proved galling to the awakened political consciousness of India and to its national self respect. The significant sentence uttered by a haughty Minister of the Crown, 'Let dogs bark, the caravan goes on', sums up the high and mighty attitude adopted by Great Britain in deciding what political rights should be granted to India from time to time and bringing

into prominence the helpless position of our country in matters vitally affecting its future. This accounts for the demand for a Constituent Assembly however much one may doubt the practicability and wisdom of such a demand in the present condition of India. The trouble is due to the fact that sufficient light has not yet been thrown on certain fundamental points which are agitating the minds of our countrymen today.

The condition laid down by the Viceroy that the communal differences in the provinces must be settled first before any advance can take place in the character of the Central Government, is open to serious objection. This is clearly a retrograde move as no such conditions were contemplated for the introduction of the scheme of Federation under the Act of 1937. But for the war, Federation would have become an accomplished fact at an early date. A still more objectionable feature of the statement is that it foreshadows the possibility of future constitutional progress being blocked if the minorities are opposed to it. It amounts to placing the future political advance of India entirely at the mercy of the minorities. The policy of 'divide and rule' is presented here in its full nakedness.

### Responsibility at the Centre

Gentlemen, provincial autonomy with an irresponsible government at the Centre is an impossible position. It is bound to create friction between the provinces and the Centre and will tend to make the Centre weak. The history of India bears ample testimony to the fact that a weak Central Government has always resulted in the growth of dissensionary tendencies and has exposed India to danger from within as well as from without. The way to ensure a strong Central Government is not by keeping its character essentially different from the character of provincial governments. A new strength must be given to it by transforming it into a responsible government broad-based on the will of the people instead of using it as an instrument for imposing on the provinces the will of an irresponsible and unresponsive Executive.

### Defence

The British Government must simultaneously make up its mind to revise its policy regarding the organization of Indian defence. It has to give up its attitude of mistrust and undue caution. Although on a superficial view of the matter it may appear to be unwise and rash to tackle such an important problem at a time when England is engaged in the prosecution of a war, a deeper and a more sympathetic understanding of national psychology as well as the pressing requirement of the situation point to the urgent need of taking a bold step in the direction of a rapid Indianisation of the defence forces of our country and of giving practical effect to a very much more liberal scheme for the recruitment of Indian officers. Public opinion in India is unanimous on this demand and it is indeed surprising and regrettable that the question of defence has not been sufficiently emphasized by the Congress.

### Fiscal Policy

Gentlemen in matters of finance and trade also England has to make up its mind to have a new approach in its relation to India and to change its angle of vision completely. There is nothing which India resents more deeply than the way in which it has been exploited and its interests constantly sacrificed. England must abandon the policy of imposing its will in fiscal matters

on India if it wishes to succeed in creating happier psychological conditions in this country

### **The Consultative Committee and the Constituent Assembly**

It must have by now become clear to the authorities in India and to the statesmen in England that the scheme of a Consultative Committee as announced by the Viceroy has not created the slightest enthusiasm in any section of the public. Instead of easing the situation it has in fact aggravated it. On the other hand, the Congress wants to have a Constituent Assembly to be constituted on the basis of adult franchise to which only the 'accepted minorities' are to return their representatives in proportion to their numerical strength and from which the Indian Princes and the Europeans are to be excluded. Congress leaders have been pressing this scheme with vigour and conviction and have made it their pivotal demand. One cannot help pointing out that it is not a practical scheme in the present circumstances and an undue insistence on the method of constituting it and on the authority which is to be assigned to it will lead us into new difficulties the extent and magnitude of which the Congress leaders in their enthusiasm are apt to ignore. Some of the present Dominions in fact succeeded in making their unilateral decisions accepted by the British Parliament either after a successful revolution or when after long efforts the various political parties which were divided on economic, religious or social differences had arrived at an agreement among themselves. The revolution in Ireland and the Boer War in South Africa illustrate cases falling in the first category while Australia and Canada belong to the second. Our efforts to achieve self government by non violent methods clearly rule out the first

executive The source of danger to peace and good government was chiefly present in Lower Canada which was liable to be attacked by the United States from the south, and it was there that the two races were so jealous of each other and showed no tendency to blend The Catholic bishops used to rule through the priests who would direct their parishioners how to vote and the labourers and cultivators used to obey them Lord Dufferin who was sent in 1833 by the British Government to report, started with the idea of solving the difficulties by (1) the application of the federal principle, and (2) the introduction of complete responsible government The French Canadians were friendly to the idea of responsible government but were opposed to federation, the British minority in Lower Canada was opposed to responsible government for fear of the French domination in the Assembly The federal idea had to be given up for the time being and an united legislature was established The Act of Union of 1840 however resulted in further emphasizing racial distinctions in Lower Canada The French Canadians felt that the scheme was only intended to crush their separate nationality and remained hostile to the system introduced The Catholics and Protestants could hardly see eye to eye on so many questions It took the people of Canada another quarter of a century to be convinced of the futility of racial and religious quarrels The fear and suspicion of American aggression also largely contributed to a change in favour of the federal movement and the idea of a greater Canada became more and more acceptable The resolutions passed at a Conference convened at Quebec in 1867 ultimately adopted the scheme of a Federal government After modifications introduced in consultation with the government in England, the recommendations contained in the Quebec resolutions were enacted in 1867 as the British North America Act



existence of states of various dimensions and possessing various degrees of authority have been a permanent feature of our Indian polity. Their feudal character, it is true, does not fit in with our growing democratic conceptions and their presence undoubtedly adds to the complexities of our present day problems making their solution more difficult. Problems of such importance cannot but obtrude themselves on our attention and we cannot solve them by shutting our eyes to facts or denying their existence and claims. To do so would merely indicate an utter lack of political sense. Another naive suggestion offered is that if the British Government decided to withdraw its Paramountcy, the problem would become very much simplified and everything would go on swimmingly. Perhaps a subtanean upheaval would be a still easier solution of such an inconvenient and ticklish question. For one thing it will relieve us from the bother of having to do a little bit of hard thinking. Surely, the problem of the Indian states cannot be dismissed with a mere wave of the hand. The claim of the states that their old treaties with the Paramount Power must remain intact, however needs a more critical examination. Treaties have undoubtedly to be respected and are not to be scrapped in a lighthearted manner, but it cannot be denied that these treaties bear a direct relation to the stage of social and political evolution reached at the time when they were made. Any other interpretation put upon them would effectively debar all progress till the end of time and would amount to mortgaging the destinies of a section of human society to a system of undiluted autocracy for ever. Constitutional monarchies have been tried and proved successful and workable in modern society. It would be a wise plan for the Indian states to adopt it in their own interest. The transition to the new order of things will necessarily take time however much an impatient democrat wedded to theories may chafe at it. Neither a federation of British India alone nor the immediate withdrawal of Paramountcy by the British nor the aimless establishment overnight a democratic and socialistic state of the most modern type from one end of the country to the other, is a practical proposition.

Gentlemen, from the above analysis of the present condition of things in India, it would be clear that the idea of a Constituent Assembly with the powers demanded for it by the Congress is unworkable. But all honest effort in the direction of hammering out a constitution which would meet the greatest amount of agreement among the Indians themselves first should be welcomed by every patriotic Indian. The history of Australia and Canada shows that the final stage was preceded by a number of convention and conferences held from time to time with a view to arrive at some satisfactory solution of their problems. It is true that our experience of the previous conferences in India has been very sad. But so was also the experience of those who worked in Australia and Canada. Is it not desirable that Government should also more actively co-operate with the Indian people on this occasion by convening a Conference consisting of public men elected by the provincial and central legislatures as well as of representatives of trade and labour interests elected by various Chambers of Commerce and central labour organizations? Rulers of important States or the ministers nominated by them together with other Princes elected by the Chamber of Princes may also be invited to this Conference along with certain elected representatives from the State legislatures wherever they are established. A certain proportion of members may also be nominated by the Viceroy to represent interests and views which may have been left unrepresented. The pooling together of Indian talent in some such manner for the

purpose of framing a really progressive and acceptable constitution for India will well repay the trouble. Gentlemen, I have no doubt that the Liberal Federation will in its present session give its most careful consideration to this important question, and it would be presumptuous on my part to anticipate its recommendations.

It is sad beyond words that an erstwhile Nationalist leader like Mr. Jinnah should have of late adopted an extremely truculent attitude. The advice recently given by him to the Muslims to observe the 'Deliverance Day' and to ask for a Royal Commission to enquire into the alleged 'atrocities' of Congress Governments is most unfortunate and inopportune at this particular juncture. Other political parties do have many serious differences with the Congress but they cannot subscribe to the view that communal bigotry is its besetting sin. To fan the flame of communal bitterness is not only suicidal from the national standpoint but it is literally playing with fire. To such of our brethren in India who are still wedded to a communal approach towards national questions—whether they be Hindus, Muslims or others—let us say, 'Pause and think in what manner your common human interests and dignity can best be safeguarded. No Indian of whatever caste or community can rise his head high with the brand of slavery on his head. Let us have the wisdom to realize that communal bigotry is a sin against civilization.' While we frankly admit that our narrow communal outlook and separatist zeal are a serious hindrance to our national progress, we would say to the British people and their statesmen: As representatives of a big nation with great achievements to its credit we trust you will rise to the occasion and will refuse to yield to the temptation of looking upon India's difficulties as England's opportunity. (Houd cheer.)

proceedings great distinction His pronouncement will be marked by courage, originality and vigour

Messages were also received, it was announced, from Mr B S Kamat of Poona, Rai Bahadur Badri Datt Joshi of Lucknow, Mr M S Sirkar of Sholapur, Mr L Vinayaka Rao, Madras, Mr Sri Prakash Singa, son of the late Kunwar Ajendra Singa, Lucknow, Mr B V Gokhale of Bombay, Dr Jai Karam Nattu Misra, Lucknow, Mr Apte Dhuria, Poona, Rai Saheb Raghuraj Singh Gou, Allahabad, Mr B B Roy, Calcutta, and the Raja Bahadur of Tiloi

Mr V T Deshpande of Yeotmal regretted his inability to attend the session owing to illness and wished the session all success

Mr Mundle, Cawnpore, extremely regretting his inability to attend the session, said 'Times are critical and anxious The Liberals never slunk from considered opinions because they might be unpopular I wish the session every success

Mr Surendra Nath Verma also announced that the hon Dr Hardy Nath Kunzru was unavoidably absent today as he had to be present at Amritsar yesterday in connection with the Scout Mela and he would return this evening Dr Kunzru extremely regretted that he could not attend today's sitting

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, it was announced, had to suddenly leave for Bombay this morning on account of a message received by him that his mother had a relapse of heart trouble and was seriously ill Sir Cowasjee had asked Mr Verma to convey his extreme regret for his absence

Shri Chimanlal Setalvad had finally decided to attend the session, Mr Verma said, but due to sudden illness he could not come They all expected him here by the Bombay mail on the 20th evening and were sorry to learn from the Bombay delegates that he was unable to come

Mr B B Roy, Calcutta, also expressed his inability to be present here

## ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Mr J N Basu

Proposing Dr L P Paranjpye to the chair, Mr J N Basu ex President of the National Liberal Federation said

Ladies and gentlemen we have arrived at a turning point in the history of our people The step that we may now choose to take may lead us to the early attainment of the promised goal or to the wilderness or to nowhere Ours is an organization that has not attempted to win cheap popularity Those who belong to the organization have this satisfaction that though it may not be consciously but probably in an unconscious mood its policy has been accepted and adopted in practice even by its opponents When the Montagu reforms were promulgated, there was an outcry from various political parties in this country that the scheme was not to be touched and that it was unacceptable The legislature, which these reforms set up, were to be avoided But we live to see that the mentality of those who took up that attitude has changed and gradually they came into the legislatures Not only did they come into the legislatures but they took part in committees appointed by the government and by the legislatures about various matters affecting the administration of this country

The association that had been refused at the commencement was contributed and effectively contributed as time rolled on When the recent reforms under

the Government of India Act of 1935 came to be operated, there was at the commencement a vehement outburst from an important political party that the Government of India Act fell far short of what had been expected in the way of constitutional advance in this country. But when the new reforms were put in operation in the provincial field, at first there was the mandate issued by the party to which I have referred that office was not to be accepted. But after about four months the matter was reconsidered and the point of view of the much smaller party to which we belong was accepted, and it was decided that the other party should take office. Since then we know the history. Office was accepted. The Government was worked and in every way the operation of the administrative machinery was more or less the same as that which prevailed when office had not been accepted by the other party. Certain new policies were no doubt promulgated and attempted to be carried out, but that happens under every system of government.

We have therefore the satisfaction of feeling that the policy and the ideas for which we stand, though attempted to be ridiculed and to be treated with contempt were ultimately treasured to heart by the people who maligned us, and were ultimately acted upon by them.

I have the greatest pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, in proposing Dr. Paranjpye to the chair (Cheers)

### Mr V N Chandavarkar

Mr V N Chandavarkar, seconding the motion, said—Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, this is the second time, sir, that you in this city of Allahabad have asked me to play this role in the absence of our distinguished leaders from Bombay, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. But it is a matter of peculiar privilege to me that I should get this opportunity of seconding this proposal to elect Dr. Paranjpye as president of this session of the Liberal Federation. Dr. Paranjpye, when he met me yesterday, paid me the greatest compliment in my life when he said, 'You are responsible for bringing me here as the president of the Federation.' I do not know whether I deserve this compliment, but I accepted the compliment because my connection with Dr. Paranjpye goes back to the year 1901 when as a student of the Elphinstone Government High School in Bombay I was given the privilege by the principal of my school to offer a right royal reception when Dr. Paranjpye returned to his homeland from Cambridge with the senior wranglership in his pocket. Since then I have had several opportunities of coming in close contact with Dr. Paranjpye, and the more I know him the more I have come to admire him.

Sir, if there is one man who can call himself a true Liberal it is Dr. Paranjpye (Hear, hear). He has always taken a very impersonal view of politics, a very impersonal view social matters, and a very impersonal view in educational matters. Whether as the principal of the Fergusson College, or as a Minister in Bombay, or as the Vice-Chancellor in Lucknow University, his administration has been characterized by principles and not by expedients. Dr. Paranjpye became a Minister because he deserved to be Minister, not because of his social status or family status or because he had been to jail, but he became a Minister on the record of work done by him in the matter of education as principal of the Fergusson College and in the matter of politics as a member of the Legislative Assembly and as a member of the Liberal Party.

The one mistake he made in his life which we all regretted, was when he elected to join that sanctuary of retired civilians the Council of the Secretary of State for India (Laughter and cheers). But he atoned for that mistake—and I think he realized that it was a mistake but he would not admit that when he left Bombay—when he came back by again taking back to educational life (laughter again) and after his retirement especially from the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Lucknow by taking his place his rightful place in the Liberal Party. It does not pay to be a Liberal in these days and it will not pay to be a Liberal for another 20 years. But it is the Liberal who alone, I think will keep this country on the path of progress—progress based on ethics, based on principles, fearless of either the British Government or fearless of any majority party or fearless of that great monster of all in this country, the minority problem. To tackle all these problems which are facing us my submission to you, Sir, is that we cannot have a better man than Dr. Paranjpye. Sir, it is my privilege to second the proposal placed before you by Mr. Basu (Cheers).

### Sir Maharaj Singh

Supporting the motion, Sir Maharaj Singh said—Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I deem it a great privilege to have been asked to support the

resolution which is before you. The previous speaker has referred to one mistake which our president-elect committed. May I refer to one other mistake? Mr Biju said that Dr Paranjpye went to Cambridge University. As one who was taught in Oxford University, I am sure you will agree with me in thinking that that was the second mistake which Dr Paranjpye made. Though he had a most distinguished career there, I am sorry to say that, knowing the tenacity with which Dr Paranjpye adheres to his views, he has never regretted the mistake that he made.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to stand between you and our president-elect. It is a matter of some disappointment to me today to see that, although this hall is full, there are very few ladies present. But I hope that the ladies here will try to bring a larger number of ladies for such meetings. I understand that when a constituent assembly takes place we are going to have adult suffrage. I also believe that adult suffrage includes women's suffrage.

Dr Paranjpye has been admirably described by the other speakers. He has had a very distinguished career. He was a Minister in the Bombay Government during very difficult days. I have often heard that Dr Paranjpye was able to stand up successfully to a somewhat unusually strong and even obstinate Governor such as Lord Darnley was reputed to be.

Dr Paranjpye was telling me only today that his father passed away when he was over 80 and that his mother is still living at the very ripe old age of 96. (Applause.) They say that heretofore counts a very great deal so far as longevity is concerned and therefore, we may all be sure that Dr Paranjpye will live to a good old age. (Cheers.) I have nothing more to say except cordially

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dr R. P. Paranjpye, president, then delivered the following address —

Brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen — I am deeply grateful to the Reception Committee and to my fellow Liberals in the country for the honour they have done me in calling me to preside over the Federation a second time. I wish it had been possible to entrust this position to somebody more deserving than myself. I had the honour of pre-iding at our Lucknow session in 1924, and it is perhaps remarkable that the same individual is called again to preside at another session in the same province. Besides this I consider myself as, next to Maharashtra, belonging to this province, having spent six happy years in your midst. I hope therefore that you will graciously overlook my shortcomings and give me your cordial co-operation in conducting successfully the proceedings of this important conference.

### Our Losses

During the last year our party lost Sir Hormasji C. Dinshaw who joined our party at its very inception twenty one years ago and was a great philanthropist and a staunch Liberal and member of our Council. We have also to mourn the loss of Mr. S. S. Persla, a leader of the Komti community of Bombay, who was a member of our party since 1918, and Dr. Sir N. Choksey who was a distinguished Liberal and public worker of Bombay.

The late Kunwar Rajendra Singh was a stalwart Liberal and a tower of strength to the party especially in U. P. He was a minister under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and resigned as a protest against the all-British personnel of the Simon Commission. His passing away is a great loss to our party and the province.

Further I cannot but refer to the great loss the whole country has sustained in the death of H. H. Su. Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda a most capable and distinguished ruler who was looked up to not only by his own subjects but by all Indians as a trusted leader keen on the all-sided progress of India.

### The Liberal Party

The Liberals may be comparatively few in numbers, especially if we only take into account those who openly proclaim themselves as such, but I am convinced that the Liberal point of view is shared by a very wide section of our countrymen and that we, the direct inheritors of the original political movement in India, are carrying the torch lighted by Dadabhai and Ranade, Pheroz Shah and Surendranath, Gokhale and Wacha. A. M. Bose and W. C. Bonnerjee, Hume and Wedderburn, Tayabjee and Telang and, shall I say, even by Tilak and Malaviya. The Liberals are the legitimate successors of the old Congress and though for the last twenty years it has got into other hands and, casting off the well-tried methods of old, sought new guides and followed new ways, we still firmly believe that our policy is ultimately more efficacious and will lead to abiding results. We are painfully conscious that our policy does not make the same appeal to the common man as some other policies do. While we admit that we Liberals do not put the same energy into our political propaganda and should take a lesson in this respect from other parties, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that middle parties that can only appeal to reason, common sense and experience are always apt to take a subordinate place in times of

storm and stress. But we should not lose heart and, realizing that in the broad stream of national life a few years are comparatively insignificant, and that sanity and statesmanship will ultimately prevail, carry on our work in the firm belief that we are the true trustees of a glorious tradition and in full confidence that our work will surely bear fruit in the progress of our beloved country.

### The International Situation

When we met last year in Bombay, the international horizon appeared dark. The Anschluss of Austria and the Munich settlement dismembering Czechoslovakia had been accomplished, the Sino-Japanese "incident" was still continuing, and the conflict in Spain was going decidedly in favour of Franco, though still not at an end. The anti-Comintern pact between Germany, Italy and Japan was the chief feature of the world situation. Germany under Hitler, after tearing up the Treaty of Versailles was frantically re-arming, and England and France were increasing their armaments in self-defence. Poland which had helped herself to a slice of hapless Czechoslovakia appeared to be one of the powerful countries of Europe, though it looked as if it was being gradually estranged from its alliance with France. Danzig continued to be an open sore. The League of Nations was gradually losing all its potentiality for successfully settling international disputes. Palestine was in great ferment owing to the violent conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. Abyssinia though nominally conquered by Italy was proving a hornet's nest both militarily and economically. The persecution of the Jews was going merrily on in Germany and Austria, and Italy had begun to take a leaf from her totalitarian sister in this abomination. Russia, though hated and reviled by the dictators appeared anxious to be recognized as a respectable member in the court of nations, especially democratic nations, and democracies looked with sympathy and hopeful interest on the great economic and political experiment that was being carried out there. She professed strict adherence to the principles of international morality and sneered at the backwardness of democracies in carrying out sanctions against aggressor nations.

Soon after the beginning of the year the clouds got darker still. Hitler not satisfied with his professed, and to a certain extent ostensibly reasonable, objective of gathering up all Germans under the Reich, swooped down upon Prague, and in one form or another incorporated Czechoslovakia into Germany. At last the democracies of England and France were roused to action. They gave undertakings to Poland, Roumania, Turkey and Greece to go to their help in case of attack by Germany and redoubled their work on rearmament. Poland with Danzig as the spear point of attack, was the immediate object of Hitler's ambition. Everybody knew that effective help could not be given to Poland by England and France except with the co-operation of Russia. So what appeared to be belated and almost unwilling negotiations began with Russia. These were interminably protracted and at last came to nothing. In the meanwhile Russia, which had so far professed the most unexceptionally correct international principles had been secretly negotiating a pact with Germany and as soon as it was signed Germany felt that it was no longer liable to attack on both fronts and therefore suddenly attacked Poland. England and France declared war against Germany in accordance with their undertakings, but without Russia they were unable to save Poland which was overrun within one month. Russia, perhaps



to stop Germany occupying the whole of Poland, also overran that hapless country which was partitioned between the Nazi and Communist dictators. The part of the Polish loot that Russia obtained almost without firing a shot has effectually prevented German access to Rumania and the Balkans. Russia did not rest content with this bloodless accession of territory. She began to exert pressure on Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia which have for all practical purposes become Russian protectorates almost as the Indian States are of the Government of India. Not satisfied with this she began to try the same dodge with Finland, and this has led to serious military operations whose end cannot be in doubt but which has evoked the sympathy of the whole world towards her. Russia has thus practically become the most powerful power in the Baltic, and Germany appears to have lost more than she gained by her pact with Russia.

The war between Germany and the western democracies goes on, for the moment at a snail's pace. One does not know how long this state of things will last. Any small incident may further extend the area of the conflict. India has for the moment been far from the centre of active operations, but dangers can very easily be conceived under some possible circumstances. Owing to the understanding between Russia and Germany, Italy is feeling disgruntled and is getting estranged from her recent partner in the Rome-Berlin axis. If Italy had stood by Germany, India would have immediately felt the effects owing to the Italian position on the Red Sea and the east coast of Africa. Even now if Russia and Germany decide to join forces and cooperate in active operations, a thing which is not out of the range of practical possibilities, India will immediately be in some danger on its north west frontier. It would, however, be useless to speculate on a future which is so uncertain and which is constantly changing. Suffice it to say that India's comparative safety for the present and also its liability to danger in future are dependent on the British connection.

### Lesson for India

I have dilated at some length on the international situation as over and above its intrinsic importance and its possible repercussions on India, it has several lessons for all of us. To the extremists on the left who at least till recently, took their cue directly or indirectly from Russia and dreamt of a communist regime in our country as the very antithesis of all imperialism the sudden emergence of Russia as an imperialist power ready to trample on her weaker neighbours and to cast all ideas of international morality to the winds must have come as a great disappointment. There are of course some among them who still swear by the name of Russia and can see nothing wrong in any of her actions, but to most people Bolshevik Russia is now unmasked as Czarist Russia under a different name with only a greater power of doing evil. To the vast majority of Congressmen who have adopted independence as India's goal but who give only a lip service to the creed of non violence it should be apparent that there is no place in these days for states that are not fully prepared to defend themselves in all eventualities. It should be obvious to them that comparative safety lies only in an intimate association with a large and powerful organization like the British Commonwealth of Nations. Weakness and resulting non violence will be no safeguard against nations that are out to grab as large portions of the world as they can. An independent India standing entirely alone on its own resources will inevitably fall a victim to some other power, be

at Japan, Russia, Italy or Germany. Finally the present international situation must serve as a warning to the British Government also. For nearly a century Britain has followed a policy in regard to India which is mainly dictated by suspicion. Whatever basis there might have been for it immediately after the Mutiny, this policy has now been shown up as unstatesmanlike. If India had been properly organised for defence it would have had a tremendous weight on the international situation. Its vast man power and its almost infinite natural resources have not been utilized as they should have been. The present feverish activity appears like the attempts to begin to dig a well when the house is on fire. Any measures taken now will require some time to produce their effect. One would have thought that the experience of the last war would have taught a useful lesson to our rulers, but that lesson was soon forgotten, and the policy of "divide and rule", of keeping India weak so that it should always require British support has been followed once again. May one hope that all sections of Indian and British opinion will, at least at this late hour, take a sane view of things and begin earnestly to prepare for a dangerous and uncertain future?

### Resignation of Congress Ministers

An immediate result of the war on India has been the suspension of democratic Government in seven provinces and the taking over by the Governors of the administration of these provinces in their own hands. Whatever one may think about the way in which the Congress ministries have carried on the administration for twenty seven months—and I shall have something to say about it later—these resignations are to be regretted in every way. The whole position appears to have been grossly mismanaged both by the British Government and the Congress ministries. Government appear to have overlooked the fact that the India of 1939 is different from the India of 1914 and to assume that Indian self respect will reconcile itself to any action that Government may independently take. While there would probably have been very little opposition from the Indian public to range India on the side of the democracies in opposition to Nazi Germany if Indian leaders and perhaps the Central Legislature had been consulted beforehand, Indians feel that they continue to be tied to the coat tails of Britain and that their self respect counts for naught with the authorities. Indians recognize that defence measures have to be taken in secrecy long beforehand but it should have been possible to secure the acquiescence of the leaders of Indian opinion in the central and even provincial legislatures before Indian troops were sent abroad to Egypt, Singapore and other places. With a genuine desire to consult and respect Indian opinion there would have been no difficulty in convincing the Indian public about the necessity of this move. Further when war was actually declared, a secret session of the Central Legislature should have been immediately called to acquaint India with all aspects of the question, and India would have become a belligerent voluntarily instead of the mere fiat of British Government. The various statements made later by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State could have been made then, though perhaps in a different tone and in more conciliatory phrases. Government should not have depended merely on the offers of help from Indian Princes—their are naturally to be expected as a matter of course—but should have done something to appeal to the heart of the Indian people. But Government appears to have taken merely a formal and legalistic view of its position and immediately declared India a belligerent. This dealing of the situation appears justified from

a consideration of the declarations made by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru immediately on the declaration of war. But imagination is the last thing our Government possesses and a fine opportunity of winning the heart of India was allowed to slip away.

### Congress Demand for a Declaration

But, if Government did not show any imagination in dealing with the situation, I am afraid the Congress organization allowed itself to be rushed into a position from which escape is difficult. While the first thoughts of the Mahatma and the Pandit were statesmanlike and generous, all this changed when the Working Committee of the Congress was called to discuss the situation. The effects of mob psychology were immediately apparent in such a meeting. Instead of confining itself to the war situation it made a demand for an immediate declaration of the war unsuited so far as they related to India. Now it should have been obvious to everybody that such unsuited demands could only be laid down in general terms, and definite words or dates were impossible to announce while the war was just in its initial stages. Nobody can prophesy the actual situation at the end of the war. Government put forward, not only as a mere debating point but as a real difficulty, the existence of communal tension as the main obstacle in the way of giving a categorical undertaking. The Congress should not have laid itself open to such a retort or made such a fanciful or impracticable demand as the convocation of a constituent assembly. It should have addressed itself to the task of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity and not indulged in a wordy warfare with Mr. Inamdar by means of declarations, statements or articles in the *Haryana* all of which have merely resulted in making the communal tension even greater. It should have taken Government at its word when it said that the aim of the British policy was the establishment of Dominion Status in India, and replied somewhat as follows. You say that you wish to put India in the way of attaining full Dominion Status. We accept your statement at its full face value. But you know as well as we do that it involves full preparedness to defend ourselves. We see the grave external dangers facing India. What immediate steps are you going to take to make India self-sufficient in matters of defence? The real test of your *bona fides* is a readiness to help India in this matter. Take Indian public opinion into full confidence and do not a moment in taking all necessary steps to organize the power of the country both in men and resources. Above all, therefore change drastically your defence and external policy, cease to regard India with suspicion, give her your full confidence, treat her as an equal, take steps to modernize the army, do not depend upon only a few classes for your defence forces but make the army, air force and navy broad based on the whole of the Indian people, organize Indian industries on a firm footing irrespective of any temporary ill-effects on British industries, start new industries which are of basic national importance, encourage Indian shipping and do not thwart it in the interests of vested British capital. Also give up your conscious or sub-conscious dependence on the divisions among Indians for the continuance of British rule. Encourage the rulers of Indian States to introduce responsible government there in the same way as in British provinces. Do all these things and the whole of India will rally to your side as one man. If the Congress had taken some such line there would have been no chance for making debating points as are now being made on both sides. On the one hand, such a practical attitude would have been appreciated by the people of England and the world in general, and India would

have had the whole British people, who are, broadly speaking, lovers of democratic freedom, on its side. On the other hand, a programme like this when fully carried out would make India truly capable of *Swaraj*—call it independence or Dominion Status—and nobody would then be able to resist a demand for it. Instead of such a practical and straightforward statement of India's demands which everybody can understand and accept as reasonable, the Congress, as is its wont, continues to harp on vague phrases and meaningless formulae which, even if accepted, will lead in future to endless difficulties of interpretation and charges of bad faith on both sides.

### Viceroy's Offer of Change at the Centre

In its insistence on words and formulae the Congress missed the possibility of making a great advance which could have been made without a great change in the Government of India Act. In his original statement the Viceroy offered to form a consultative committee, on which public opinion would be fully represented, to help in the prosecution of the war. The offer was so vague and so dependent on the personal predilections of the authorities that it was rightly rejected by all parties. In the succeeding discussion with Mr. Gandhi, however, this offer was considerably modified, and the Viceroy agreed to nominate certain public leaders to his Executive Council. This offer was also contemptuously rejected by the Congress. To me it appears that this was a great mistake. This suggestion could probably have been hammered into the form of a cabinet responsible to the legislature and a convention might have been established whereby if one of these new ministers in charge of any departments lost the confidence of the legislature he would have had to resign. At present one of the great defects of our transitional machinery of government is the irresponsible and irremovable personnel of the Central Government. For a legal and formal change in the Central Government in all its aspects much time and energy would have to be spent by Parliament to make the necessary alterations in the Government of India Act, a thing which would have been impossible at the present moment, hence an attempt should have been made to put the proposal of the Viceroy into an acceptable shape. It may not have given a very great deal, but it cannot at the same time be considered altogether insignificant. It is the duty of practical men to take whatever is offered provided it is a part of an acceptable whole, and use this part itself as a lever to get the remainder. The history of the British Cabinet system itself shows that it attained its present form by gradual and even unperceptible steps during a period of over a hundred years. This is not the first instance by any means when the Mahatma has by his absurd insistence on formal terms lost a golden opportunity of getting a valuable step forward in the path of India's progress.

### A Constituent Assembly

The insistence on a constituent assembly seems to be equally impolitic. The scheme can be riddled with objections and its discussion is likely to create further difficulties. It seems magnificent to call such an assembly elected on "adult suffrage", but does one seriously think that the illiterate villager, who would form the vast portion of the electorate, is capable of pronouncing an opinion upon complicated matters like the machinery of the Government of a vast country like India? Is it too uncharitable to say that Mr. Gandhi expects to carry the uneducated voter off his feet by means of a whirlwind campaign in which high-sounding words

like truth, Ahimsa, Charkha, Dharma, untouchability, reinforced, if need be, by the threat of a fast, would be used as slogans to give him a mandate to do what he likes? Is it not likely that such a campaign will lead to inter communal riots unless there is previous understanding with the leaders of other parties? Already there have been several modifications of the original idea of the adult suffrage, minorities are to be given the right of separate election for the purpose of electing this assembly, the question of weightage has been left beautifully vague, the question of the representation of Indian States has been untouched, the way in which minorities of opinion that do not bow the knee at the Shiegun shrine are to be represented has been left unconsidered, and a vast number of other questions have been held over possibly to give a chance to the Mahatma's inner voice to express itself. Several of these questions are to be first settled, according to Mr Gandhi, by a consultation among the leaders of the various parties, or even by the award of the Government which it is intended to replace. If such an agreement is possible on these vital preliminary points in regard to the formation of the constituent assembly by a friendly discussion between the leaders or even through the benevolent intervention of Government itself, what objection can there be to such discussion on the whole question of our constitution itself? If the thing is possible in one connection it should be possible in another. I am reminded of the ambitious chemist who desired to discover a reagent which could dissolve every solid substance, but was nonplussed when asked by a plain man in what receptacle he was going to store this reagent. Is it too much to say that Mr Gandhi is like this chemist who does not see such a practical objection to his ambitious scheme? The history of all constituent assemblies, whenever they appear to have succeeded, shows that the ground was first of all fully prepared by informal discussion among all leaders and by securing an almost complete preliminary unanimity and then if at all it was considered necessary, a formal cachet of approval was given to it by means of a constituent assembly if it could be convoked. Many such ambitious projects have on the other hand led to heated disputes that ended in nothing as at the time of the French Revolution. I am inclined to think that a more appropriate course for our leaders would be to follow the path, which though it actually failed in the end, seemed to be so promising, and get together a small informal and manageable conference like that which drafted the Nehru report. Even Pandit Jawaharlal may condescend to take a leaf out of his father's book.

### Lost Opportunities

To me it appears to have been a tactical mistake on the part of the Congress to insist at this juncture on a formal declaration by Government about the future system of government in India with a veiled threat of non-cooperation. While I say this I am equally clear that Government of its own accord should have come out with an appeal and a declaration of policy which would have stirred the imagination of the Indian people and enlisted their heart, as I believe their head already was, on the side of the democracies which had taken up arms in defence of freedom and international order. Thus there has been a lamentable series of lost opportunities on both sides and instead of cordial co-operation there has been interminable and fruitless discussion in a huckstering spirit. Everybody knows that at the end of the war everything will change and India cannot remain as it was. Even as a result of the last war there occurred developments,

which, however disappointing and halting, did mean some improvement and could have led to much greater progress, if our leaders as well as Government had played the game in a spirit of mutual understanding. Now twenty years have revolutionised the whole outlook. Awakened India cannot be disregarded any more, and if it cheerfully and wholeheartedly ranges itself on the side of the allies, its future progress would have been assured. It is not too late even now. The Allies are faced with a problem far more difficult than they were twenty five years ago, and Indian support will count a great deal both from the moral and material point of view. The outlook of the British has also materially altered, and there would have been very little opposition even from the diehards of Britain to a radical change in India's constitution. I must notice another consequence of the different attitudes taken on the one hand by the Congress and on the other by Muslim leaders like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and Mr. Izzul Huq and by the Indian States. When after the war there is renewed consideration of the Indian problem, British statesmen will be necessarily influenced by this contrast, and at least unconsciously, their weight will be on the side of those sections and against the large mass of nationalist India a very large proportion of whom are Hindus. Hindus already have had to make unreasonable concessions to those sections in the form of weightage and disproportionate representation in services and legislatures to secure their support. Is it wise on their part to increase their own difficulties in future and make the achievement of a purely democratic India, in which caste and creed and class have no place, even more difficult than it need have been?

### Working of Provincial Democracy

Eight provincial Governments in which Congress had a big majority have been ruling their provinces for over two years and have now resigned. In seven of these provinces Governors have assumed full powers of Government, and in the remaining four provinces responsible democratic Governments are still functioning. It is now time to take stock of the situation and examine the prospects of democracy in India. In the first place the fears entertained by the British diehards about the transfer of law and order to popularly elected ministries have on the whole proved unfounded. Though there have been many complaints, some of them with a substratum of truth but most of them without any foundation one can say in general that responsible Government in the provinces has proved moderately successful. The Ministers have worked hard and done their best to carry out their programme though signs of moderate hurry want of previous experience, and excessive anxiety to consolidate their own party rather than advance the interests of the country as a whole and conciliate minorities, have been but too evident. Policies have been followed and legislation has been enacted which have not produced all the effects desired. Occasionally there have been a tendency to rule roughshod over classes in which their opponents have predominance. In spite of high sounding phrases on their lips most of the ministries have not shown themselves to be better than the previous bureaucratic Governments in the distribution of patronage or to be above manipulating rules and regulations to get their own supporters out of tight corners. The old trick of appointing committees or commissions of investigation to get rid for the time being of unpleasant questions has been fully learnt. Many high sounding promises have been entirely forgotten or

even explained away. Financial commitments have been made which it would be very difficult to meet in their entirety. Some of the minorities have been rubbed on the wrong side and they feel so disgruntled that they are expressing their delight at the resignation of the ministries. Sectional, linguistic and class favouritism is not unknown. There has been a recrudescence of communal tension. With all these criticisms the single fact that the Governors have not felt themselves called upon to exercise their reserved powers owing to any serious invasion of the rights of minorities shows that the machine of provincial autonomy can work, even though creakily. There is reason to hope that if the elected legislatures and their responsible cabinets are allowed to work in full independence, unfettered by extraneous interference, democracy will be found to have a suitable soil in our country.

### Totalitarian Tendencies

The great danger to democracy in India appears to be the growing spirit of totalitarianism both in the Congress and the Muslim League. In a true democracy the elected representatives must realize their responsibility to their electors, and the cabinet to the elected representatives. If by the interposition of an extraneous authority the sense of this responsibility is deadened democracy cannot be said to be stable whatever external facade it may have or by whatever name it may choose to call itself. The Congress ministries in the eight provinces could not by any stretch of imagination be called responsible to the members of their legislatures or the primary electors. They are the bond slaves of a small *junta* called the Parliamentary Committee and of the Mahatma who really controls all organizations of the Congress and whose word is law. The electors are only expected to vote once in five years for the candidates representing the Congress and take part in periodical demonstrations for the greater glory of the Mahatma or any of his lieutenants of greater or less importance. As for the Congress members of the legislatures "there is not to question why there is but to vote and lie often to their own convictions. All this goes under the name of discipline which is said to be necessary in a time of war even of a non-violent character. By the way this continued use of military language in the mouth of the apostle of *ahimsa* appears to me to be mere cant. I can appreciate a sense of discipline in any organized body of individuals, but it should be so exercised as not to kill all sense of self-respect or independent judgment. I can understand the Congress laying down general lines of policy and comparing notes at intervals. But when it comes to one member of the Parliamentary Committee interfering in the choice of the personnel of the cabinets, or in the details of administrative or legislative measures or even, if rumour is not a lying jade in matters of appointments great and small in three or four provinces we are no longer within the domain of legitimate discipline but are dreadfully close to Fascism or Nazism. The list and the most important of the ten commandments of the Fascist militia is: Mussolini is always right. The Nazis are taught that Justice and Hitler's will are one and the same. In the Congress organization from the humblest primary member of a village Congress committee to the Premier of a province everybody has to regard the view of the Mahatma as sacrosanct. And this view may change as violently as you like. Thus the refusal in April, 1937, to form ministries unless the Governors give an undertaking not to use their safeguarding powers, and the decision to form such ministries in July of the same year

without obtaining such an undertaking, were both praised by the obedient Congressmen as the highest exhibition of statesmanship. The decision to fast at Raykot and the decision to give up that fast a few days later without much having happened in the interval, both sent our patriots into ecstasies as supreme illustrations of Mahatma grandeur. The Latin poet held up a woman's heart as the perfect type of what is varying and changeable, but he obviously never came across a Mahatma in the primitive days ! Seriously, this absurd veneration for the word of an individual, however eminent, is the absolute negation of the democratic ideal. We have in our country but too many of such deified men and the hosts of their misguided devotees, but they generally wear a religious garb. But democratic politics is a practical business based on history, reason and experience, it should not find a place for such supermen whether they are called a Duce, a Lubber or a Mahatma. If at the present time we express sympathy for democracies fighting for freedom, we should take care that we ourselves are not unwittingly heading for the abyss of totalitarianism which is its very antithesis.

What I have said about the totalitarian tendencies in the Congress applies in some measure to the Muslim League and some other organizations. Mr Jinnah is claiming to be the Muslim Mahatma whose word is law and who can take any decisions like the recent decision to observe a day of thanksgiving at the recent resignation of Congress ministers without consulting his colleagues. He has not yet learnt all the tricks of Mahatmaship, but appears to be getting on. My one hope that the Muslims, with their long traditions of democratic equality will not imitate this undesirable aspect of the Congress organization ? What democracy wants are capable, far-seeing and state manlike leaders, not a Leader with a capital ' L'.

### Hindu Muslim Tension

The great obstacle in the way of India's reaching its political goal is the growing want of confidence between the Muslim League and the Congress. In spite of any alleged detailed charges I think everybody will admit that these cannot be serious and cannot generally be substantiated. Of course in any particular place small matters loom large and continual repetition of such charges increases the irritation. It anybody is bent on finding causes for growing he can always find them. But sensible leaders should take care not to attach an exaggerated importance to such matters and should try to smooth out such differences. But owing to the strained relations exactly the opposite course is being followed. On the side of the majority party there is too great an insistence on non-essentials which are being represented as matters of vital national concern. Thus the stress laid upon the Congress flag and the attempts to force it down upon all as a national flag leads to the Muslim League insisting upon its own flag. After all a flag is a mere symbol, and it should be a symbol of unity rather than of discord and I hope the recent declaration of the Mahatma that it should not be hoisted at any place if there is any objection to it will be strictly followed by all Congressmen. The same is the case with the Bande Mataram song, the Charkha and Khaddar and Gandhi cap. All the may be very good in their way but the attempt to force them down the throats of others even though they may be in a numerical minority, only help to accentuate the tension. When the large and more vital questions have been satisfactorily settled and there is a general feeling of friendliness everywhere, it would not be very difficult to devise a national flag or to have a national



anthem acceptable to all I am not particularly attracted by a special party uniform as it seems to be an imitation of the black or brown shirts of the Fascists and Nazis, still I consider that a generally accepted national dress will add to the solidarity of the country, though this should evolve of itself rather than be specially invented and forced upon everybody. Similar remarks can be made about the Vidya Mandir scheme and other alleged causes of difference. The leaders should try to keep such matters in the background rather than bring them prominently forward. But unfortunately this is exactly what is often not being done.

### The Congress Claim

The main cause of all this tension is, however, the *amour propre* of both sides. The Congress considers itself entitled to represent the whole nation including the Muslims, while the Muslim League wants to be recognized as the only body representing the Muslims. To an observer who is in neither of these camps it seems that while there is some substratum of truth in both these claims they cannot be fully sustained. The Congress is undoubtedly the biggest and best organized political body in the country. But it cannot be considered as the sole representative of all sections. In spite of the presence in it of a few Muslims and in spite of various attempts at mass contact with them, one must admit that the huge body of Muslims do not regard it as representing themselves and do not consider their interests safe in its hands. This may be an unreasonable attitude on their part, but it is absurd to deny its existence. The landlords and capitalists have also not joined it in any large numbers. We Liberals also do not belong to it though we are always prepared to support many individual items in its programme. In spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the Mahatma for the uplift of the Hindus there is, I believe, a feeling among them that the sympathy of many Congressmen is only skin deep and it is undoubted that Dr. Ambedkar, their undisputed leader, has not identified himself with Congress activities like the Hanjan Sevak Sangh intended for their advance. On the other hand, the Kisan movement and the labour movement are undoubtedly critical of the aims and methods of the Congress, though they may not in all cases have formally separated from them. The Congress can not entirely represent either the large body of progressive Hindu opinion represented by Mr. Savakar, Bhu. Parmanand and Dr. Moonje, or the huge though comparatively silent body of Sanatani Hindus who sigh for the revival of ancient Hindu culture. I leave out of account the question of the attitude of the Indian States and their peoples, though any national political movement must include them in its purview. In view of all these facts the Congress cannot claim to be the sole representative of India, though it is the most important single political body in the country and though it can command huge majorities in many provinces, which perhaps is partly explained by the general existence of single membered constituencies which tend to leave minorities unrepresented and also by the glamour attaching to Mr. Gandhi's name and personality.

### The Muslim League

It is necessary to examine in the same detail the claim of the Muslim League. But in this case also it may be generally admitted that it is the most important organization among the Muslims. Owing to the intense background of religion, dissidents among them are not so vocal as in the case of the Congress, though one can name the Shias, the Momins and others as at least

indifferent to the League. It is probable also that many of the younger educated Muslims are not attracted to the League, partly because they are not fundamentally religious and partly because they consider that a national movement must have a broader base than mere religion. There is also an appreciable number of nationalist Muslims whose leader is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, of Communist-minded Muslims who are attracted by Bolshevism, and of Muslim reformers who regard modern Turkey of Kemal Ataturk as an example to follow. It may be said in general terms that the claim of the Muslim League is as well or as ill founded as the claim of the Congress. When there is any disinclination to accept these claims it is sound policy not to make them but to depend upon actual work and the intrinsic merit of their programmes for their tacit acceptance by all. But both bodies are now making these claims a matter of prestige, and when in any dispute prestige comes in, common-sense and sanity are sure to go out.

that on one or two points there may be a difference of view, but on such questions free vote should be allowed and the decision should be left to the unrestricted judgment of the Assembly without the use of the party whips. Such a freedom of voting is not unknown even in British cabinets, and I know of at least one instance where even in the Morley Minto Councils a member of the Executive Council was, for conscientious reasons, allowed to abstain from voting on the Government side, and it may be mentioned in passing that this abstention led to the defeat of Government by one vote. It may be generally expected that when a body of intelligent men, drawn together by a general consensus of views, work daily together in intimate association, such cases will not be frequent and there will be a good deal of give and take between them. It will be generally agreed that the Congress majority is inclined to treat all opposition with scant courtesy, to make every vote a party one, thus making its members mere automata, and, to carry out the behests of the High Command with a high hand. For the satisfactory working of democratic institutions there must be a desire to treat every opposition with respect and to yield on points on which the opposite party makes out a good case in debate, even though it is against the previous decision of the party in power. The large majorities which the Congress party has in seven provinces appear to have turned its head and its want of consideration to its opponents has made all minorities feel disgruntled and sullen. If no victory in constitutional argument can avail, people's minds naturally turn to extra-constitutional ways of action. The Congress party in the legislatures should learn the lesson of the saying 'It is good to have a giant's strength but it is cruel to use it like a giant.'

Some modification of the rigorous party discipline seems to be called for if the injured feelings of Muslims and other minorities are to be allayed. It is not a great deviation even from the strict democratic practice of England where in times of great stress all parties combine to form national Governments without giving up their own fundamental principles. Cannot India try various new methods and work out a system which will best suit its own peculiar conditions? The one most important point is to bring various communities together on purely political and economic platforms and to do away with communal parties altogether. This can be done by winning each other's confidence. Riding the high horse on the strength of huge majorities is not the best way of attaining the object. It may be worth while studying the constitution of a country like Switzerland where three clearly marked linguistic divisions of the country have long learnt to work in harmony for the good of the motherland. There the German, the French or the Italian speaking constituents of the population do not cherish any extra-territorial loyalty to Germany, France or Italy, as they all feel that they can fulfil their duties in their own land. There all the three languages are treated alike by the state nor is there any distinction between the Roman Catholic or Protestant populations so far as their country is concerned.

### The Defence Problem.

I earnestly trust that the leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League and other parties and sections in the country will come together and in a conciliatory spirit work out the country's programme for the future. Recrimination must be avoided and a determined effort must be made to reach a settlement. There may be some difficulties from the British Government,

I am very glad to see that the Congress executive has appointed a national planning committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and I hope it will lay down a comprehensive programme and that provincial and central Governments will carry it out vigorously. If the Pandit can do this work satisfactorily, he will be doing far more for the country than any amount of polemical recrimination. In this connection I must also urge the encouragement of Indian shipping in all ways, and cordially support the proposal to restrict coastal shipping to Indian concerns as is done by many other countries. Just as widespread civil aviation is a necessary background to an efficient air force, an extensive merchant marine is essential to a national navy. On several points we are likely to come into conflict with vested foreign interests, but if all Indian parties continue to make a united demand for such national reorganization as well as for political advance it cannot be long withstood.

### Federation

It is not my desire to speak at any great length on purely political reforms. Full Dominion Status is what we all aim at and every political measure must be a step in the direction of its attainment. In its broad outlines the Indian Dominion that we envisage must be federal in structure with the subordinate administrations having clearly marked functions. I am in favour of a strong Central Government for there is but too great a dissipative tendency in India, and we should be careful to discourage it as far as possible. Indian States will necessarily have to form component parts in such a federation. When we find that the best minds of Europe are groping towards a European Federation in which the present independent nations will shed some of their existing privileges as the solution of the present malaise of their continent we should beware of preparing trouble for ourselves in future by entrenching the component units of an Indian federation too firmly in their particularist privileges. One of the great drawbacks of the new Government of India Act is that it shows too great a tenderness for the rights of the components of the Federation and the Indian States in particular are to make hardly any sacrifices for the privilege of joining it. They are looking too much to their treaty rights and prerogatives. But modern political thought requires that there must be some easily practicable method of revising treaties that are out of date and Europe has come to its present deplorable condition because the provisions relating to treaty revision were found impracticable or were not acted upon. The Indian States must realize the changed condition of India and the world. When long standing imperial diadems have toppled down in the dust and their wearers when not physically liquidated are in exile, Indian rulers should not insist too much on their outworn treaties or depend upon a foreign government for support. They should introduce reforms in their States and bring their people at least up to the political level of their neighbours in British provinces. Some of the farsighted among them are already taking means to effect this change but they all should bestir themselves in good time for the march of events may otherwise be too strong for them. The British Indian provinces also must adjust their provincial ambitions to the supreme need of having a strong centre. In every federation there is generally a well marked demarcation between the central and the provincial spheres, but in any federation worth the name the interests of the centre must ordinarily prevail ultimately against those of a subordinate member.

The need of the hour is to secure peaceful political evolution in India. It is not to be secured by the delivery of political ultimatums or by enunciating the minimum demands of any one section, or by too great insistence on treaties or vested rights, or by any fanciful theories of racial superiority or capacity. If this evolution is brought about in conditions of strife and turmoil, it will leave behind it unsavoury memories which will hamper future progress. The best way is for all parties, the Government, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Sabha, the scheduled classes, the Liberals and other sections, to come together in a spirit of friendliness and hammer out a solution by compromise. If all parties understand that too great insistence on their own claims is likely to harm the whole structure that a free and honourable association with the British Commonwealth of Nations is to be preferred to a nominally independent existence which is bound to be precarious in the actual state of the world that religious considerations should be kept out of practical questions of politics and economics that full liberty of the individuals is a goal worth striving for and that the *raison d'être* of a state is only to secure this liberty to the individual, it will be possible to reach a peaceful solution of the Indian problem. In a conference of this kind the Liberals have an essential part to play. There is the only party which is not based on religious affiliations and which believes in constitutional methods and gradual evolution. Still I am sure Indian Liberals will be prepared to co-operate wholeheartedly with any or all sections whatever may be their theoretical differences with them. They firmly trust that a great future lies before their country and that their country will make its own contribution to the progress of the world. The world is for the moment out of joint. But it is only by a wise application of broad Liberal principles that it will once more begin to tread the well-tried path of peaceful civilization which is the surest condition for securing the happiness and contentment of humanity.

I have confined myself to questions relating to Indian constitutional progress & these are at present occupying most attention in the country. I have left myself no time to speak at any length about matters of legislation and administration both in the Central and Provincial spheres. Not that these matters are less important for they affect the real happiness of the people and determine the pace of the country's progress. But I spoke about many of them fifteen years ago and do not wish to repeat myself more than I can help. Moreover in our legislature they receive detailed consideration, though unfortunately the point of view of the Liberals is often not adequately expressed owing to their absence from the legislatures. Such questions refer to tenancy legislation, to schemes for debt redemption to industrial disputes to rural reconstruction to reorganization of education of all grades (including the Wardha scheme), to the introduction of prohibition to the use of representative legislation, to control movements of individuals and meetings and free expression of opinion by the press to interference with ordinary processes of law, to the distribution of patronage to the treatment of the services, to the day-to-day relations between communities, to the uplift of the scheduled classes to Shia-Sunni disputes to the advancement and regulation of industries like sugar, textiles &c to industrial planning, to road development, to the administration of railways, and to a host of other matters. While on many of these questions the aims of governments are admirable, the way in which they are being carried out leaves much to be desired. On all these questions the Liberals have a definite outlook. On

the one hand, they refuse to remain stagnant and desire to move with the times, on the other, they generally eschew shock tactics, high sounding phrases and method of jobbery, graft and improper patronage. They put every question to the test of general good, dealing tenderly, but not too tenderly, with vested interests, but realizing at the same time the need for well considered changes. They have an intense belief in the liberty of every individual consistently with similar liberty for all, and abhor all totalitarian methods in whatever form they may clothe themselves. The heaven of liberalism as we represent it is therefore essential in the public life of our country and it is up to us to make our voice heard and felt.

The times require that Liberals should bestir themselves and spread their views among a much wider section of the public than we unfortunately seem to be doing at present. Disappointments and neglect we may have to face, but we should not lose heart. You cannot fool all the people all the time, and I am sure that the innate practical sense of our people will ere long come back to the gospel of rational progress, individual freedom of thought and action and the greatest good of the greatest number. Shall we not put all our energies into this all important national work? (*Loul Cleer* )

*Dr R P Paranjpye* Gentlemen the open session for today is now over and the Federation will meet on December 29 that is the day after to-morrow at 11.30 a.m. All the delegates form the Subjects Committee. The Subject Committee will meet to-morrow punctually at 12 noon in this hall.

I have to make another announcement. Our last item will be a song. But I wish to announce that after that we shall have a tea party. The party is being given by one of our delegate, Sri Bihadur Babu Bhagwati Saran Singh *raia* of Anapur (Ajlau). Members of the Reception Committee, delegates and other guests who have been specially invited to the party are requested to go over there to the *shamiana* in the compound.

## SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

(December 28 1939)

The Subjects Committee met at 12 noon on December 28 1939 under the presidency of Dr R P Paranjpye and deliberated for nearly eight hours. The resolutions to be moved at the open session were agreed upon.

## RESOLUTIONS

(December 29 1939)

The Liberal Federation again met in open session on December 29 1939 at 12 noon in Mayo Hall with Dr R P Paranjpye in the chair. The president was led to the *lais* in procession and the proceedings commenced with the Vande Mataram song.

## LIBERAL PARTY'S LOSSES

The following condolence resolution was put from the chair and carried all standing —

- (a) The National Liberal Federation of India records with sorrow the death of Kunwar Rajendra Singh of Lucknow a former Minister in the U P Government who was a prominent member of the Liberal Party and rendered meritorious services to the country.

The Federation offers its deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family

- (b) The Federation records with sorrow the deaths of Mr A V Patwardhan, a foundation member of the Servants of India Society, who specially interested himself in the question of Indian states, Sir Hormosji Dinshaw who was a member of the party ever since its foundation and a great philanthropist, Mr S S Persha, a member of the Ichu Community of Bombay, and Dr Sir Nusratji H Choksey of Bombay, all of whom were staunch Liberals and rendered valued services to the country. The Federation offers its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family

## INTERNATIONAL WAR

### Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh

*Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh* (Lucknow) Mr President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution which I have the honour to move is one but at the same time it is in three parts. Let me read out to you the first part —

‘ The Federation strongly condemns the policy of aggression followed by the totalitarian states against smaller or weaker states and sympathizes with the victims. The Federation considers that Great Britain and France are fighting Germany in the cause of democracy and freedom and feels that Indian sympathies are on the side of the democratic nations and that the whole of India wishes that their efforts will be crowned with success.

Now this needs very little elaboration at my hands. So far as I am aware, every political body in this country has expressed its sympathy with the victims of aggression and has at the same time denounced the aggressors. It is hardly necessary for me to mention to this audience the various outrages that have been committed by Germany under the Hitler regime. You will remember how in the first instance Austria which had been created a small but independent nation, was in the course of a few days incorporated in the German Reich. There was perhaps some shadow of a claim of right in that incorporation, because the greater portion of the population of Austria were Germans or at least Germans speaking. But look at the next active aggression which was against the Czechs. Not content with the settlement arrived at in Munich which, according to many was an overgenerous settlement, Hitler, within a few months of signing that agreement proceeded to take forcibly within the Reich the whole of Czechoslovakia, although Czechoslovakia was never at any rate in modern times a portion of Germany. It was before the Great War of 1914 an integral part of Austria and Austria and Germany were two separate countries between whom in the latter half of the nineteenth century there was war. Then came the attack on Poland last September in spite of the protests not only of Great Britain and France—but because you may consider them to be partisan nations inasmuch as they signed a Pact with Poland—but I think that I am right in saying of almost the whole world including an independent and impartial nation such as the United States of America. All these joined in the denunciation of this outrage on Poland. President Roosevelt had suggested arbitration. Poland accepted it, Germany would have none of it and I believe that I am right in saying that up to the present day President Roosevelt has not had the courtesy of receiving any reply from Hitler. A clearer

case of aggression never took place I now come to the second part of the resolution

"The Federation appeals to all Indians to give their support to the cause for which the democracies are fighting

Now as far I have been able to discover, there has been more than one statement by different political bodies advocating support to the allied cause, since it is the cause of democracy and freedom. If my memory serves me right, the Hindu Mahasabha not so very long ago said that they considered that the cause of democracy should be supported by this country. I noticed only in today's newspapers that the Council of the All India Conference of Indian Christians has made a similar statement, or rather that its president has made a similar statement, and I believe that Mr. Jinnah, in representing the Muslim League, has never denounced the point of view of the Punjab Muslim leaders that active support should be given by at least the province of the Punjab to the allies. It is true that the largest and most important political body in India, the Congress, has given only conditional support. What is said by its Working Committee in plain language is this. We give to the democracies our full sympathy. Poland, Czechoslovakia and no doubt Finland are entitled to our heartfelt sympathy. But we shall give no material support whatsoever unless, as a condition precedent, the British Government accede to certain demands.

Now ladies and gentlemen, what is the use of sympathy of that kind? It seems to me more straightforward and more logical to be silent on the point and not to send any expressions of sympathy either to the victims of aggression or to Great Britain or France. Let me take an analogous case. Your neighbour's house is burgled. The persons living in that house may not in all respects, have proved agreeable to you. You may have disliked some of the things that they have done. At the same time you dislike very much more the burglars and you are well aware that if and when that house has been burgled and perhaps burnt to cinders the next attack will be on your house. You are asked for help. You turn round and say to them. 'You have my full sympathy. I dislike intensely this attack upon you but as to effective help I am very sorry that I cannot give it. I wish to ask you what is the use of sympathy without any practical demonstration of assistance. That is exactly the view that Finland has recently expressed to the League of Nations. "Thanks very much, the Finns have said for your sympathy but we shall be only grateful if you send us military help. The result has been that material assistance is being sent not only by England and France but by nations such as America in the form of money by Sweden in men and by Italy in aeroplanes. It is this assistance that may pull Finland out of the fire rather than mere expressions of sympathy and heartfelt commiseration.

Now have you noticed this ladies and gentlemen, that there is no democratic country in the world, so far as I know, which has sympathized with this attitude of the Congress, that is to say, refusal of all support unless certain preliminary demands are fulfilled. There is, however, one country which has been immensely pleased with what the Congress has resolved, and that is Germany. I have heard, as you no doubt have heard, statements issued by the Berlin radio. I understand that there was one issued yesterday which criticized our President's speech. It is a compliment perhaps to the President that his name and fame have already reached Berlin but the criticism was that his speech was not the kind of stuff that is wanted in Germany, where they much



preferred what the Congress Governments had said and done. That pleases Hitler, not Dr. Paranjpye's speech. I now come to the third part.

"The Federation is convinced that the larger interests of India are bound up with the defeat of Nazism and the success of the cause of democracy and freedom. At the same time in order to enable this country to put forth its wholehearted support, the imagination of the people should be captured by a change in the attitude of the British Government regarding the future of India."

for these smaller or weaker states and with the victims of aggression on the part of the totalitarian states. The world should know and all those with whom we are connected should know that our sympathies, spontaneous and full, are with them and that while we feel that sympathy, we cannot but desire success to those nations that have stood up for these devastated nationalities. They are doing all they can to bring life into a body that has been sought to be crushed. They are trying to set up these small states on their feet again. And these democracies that have been attempting this difficult task have now our fullest sympathy, and we cannot but feel that we should render whatever help we can, though it may be, as I have said, that in our present condition we are not capable of rendering to the fullest extent all the help that we might have rendered had we been in more favourable circumstances. But whatever help we can render we should contribute, whatever ways are open to us, we must take, in order that we may contribute the little strength that we have on the side of those that are trying to help these nations that have been crushed under foot. We cannot but feel that attempts are being made to obliterate these nations out of the map of the world. The fight against such attempts of the totalitarian states, should have in the fullest measure our sympathy and support, and we cannot but deem that the cause that Britain and France have taken up is the cause of the spirit of democracy and of the spirit of freedom. To an Indian this cause is sacred, this cause is inspiring, and we cannot but render whatever help we can for the furtherance of such a cause. At the same time we must state what the real feeling in India is in the matter. We cannot but feel at the same time that had we been placed in more favourable circumstances, we—a nation of 300 millions a country which is full of material resources—could have rendered much greater help. I may say decisive help. All those that have the power at the present moment for evoking that full measure of support should create an atmosphere which would attract that sympathy and rouse those latent capacities that are now dormant. It will not do merely to entertain the feelings to which I have referred but we give expression to the feeling so that others specially those with whom we are in more intimate contact, should know that while declaring as to what our future should be, a much larger measure of help and support will be evoked, and that the declaration should be clear and definite so that a more favourable atmosphere may be created. I commend this resolution to your acceptance.

### Rai Bahadur Kunwar Guru Narain

*Rai Bahadur Kunwar Guru Narain* (Lucknow) Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it is my proud privilege to support the resolution so ably moved by my friend, Kunwar Sir Mahu Singh, and seconded by Mr. Bisu Betore. I say a few words on the subject. I must express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sir C. Y. Chintamani and the hon. Mr. Sanyal for their kind invitation to attend this session of the Liberal Federation. People have different views about this body and there have been many who have been staunch critics of the Federation. Some have described the Liberal leaders as arm-chair critics. Some say that they are great fighters of commas and full stops. Whatever their views might be, I am inclined to think that I should not take them as criticisms but as compliments.

The resolution that has been moved is to be divided into four parts. The first part is condemnation of the aggression of the totalitarian states over

weaker and smaller nations, the second, sympathy for the victims of the aggression, the third, an appeal to India to help the cause for which the democracies are fighting against the totalitarian states and the fourth an appeal to the British Government for a change in its outlook with regard to the future status of India. As far as the first two parts are concerned, I think they are self explanatory. There is no doubt that we condemn this aggression over weaker states. And there can be no two opinions that we have every sympathy for those who have been the victims of aggression and I think not only this body but the entire world condemns and has sympathy for the victims. Now as regards the third part of the resolution, I mean an appeal to Indians to help the cause for which the democracies are fighting, Sir, there has been a difference of opinion over this. There have been bodies which say that we should give only conditional support to Britain and France. There have been some organizations who plead that unconditional support should be given to Britain and France. This is no doubt a question which deserves our attention. I would like all of you to consider this question from this point of view. Suppose the Allies, Great Britain and France, get defeated, what will be the future of India? Do you think that the salvation, the freedom, the independence for which Indians are fighting, will be forthcoming if the Allies are defeated and there is success for Germany or Russia? That is the question which we have to reply to, and I am firmly convinced that if we are not going to give our unreserved support to the Allies, and in any way if Germany, Russia or other countries which are dominating the world today, get success, then, I think, salvation and freedom for India will be doomed for ever and can never be achieved. As for the fourth part, I think it is known to every Englishman and not only to every Englishman but to the entire world that Indians can no more remain slaves and they are determined to get themselves free as soon as possible and I do not think that by bargaining at this juncture when the entire situation in Europe is hanging in the balance, India can be more benefited. It is a plain question that if you are in need of help and someone comes to you and offers you help without any sort of restriction, I think we should be more sure of the results of that type of help which we render but if you just put some condition and say, "Well, I am helping you, but in return you have to do this thing for me, you can very well imagine how far effective that type of help will be. So I am strongly in favour, not in self interest but in the interest of the country, that the Allies must be helped in the prosecution of this war. I may say that being a landlord, I have no love lost for the British. (Kao Raja Dr Shyam Behari Misra Hear, hear) And you know that in this very province, tenancy legislation has been drawing the attention of every one. I have been very bitterly opposing the Government for excluding such provisions which Government has only placed in the Tenancy Act to poison the ears of the tenants against their landlords and not to allow them a cordial relationship. I have always held that landlords have never said that we do not want to give tenants, rights. We are prepared to concede rights but we do not want those mischievous provisions which, instead of creating harmony between landlords and tenants, (hear, hear) go to alienate the feelings and make them fight with each other. We have expected justice from the Government. We thought that the British Government may exercise its influence in this direction but to my utter surprise, I make no secret of it, the British Government have kicked the classes simply to humour the

Congress at this juncture and I take them to be nothing but opportunists who sail with the wind without caring for justice of any sort. Sir, the question is, Mr Basu just said, that the very little help that we can render—we have very little help to render and whatever we can render, we are prepared to do. I say we have got the greatest resources to render help if we are disposed.

I cannot for a moment think that the Liberal Federation is a body which has only few individuals. I can say unhesitatingly that the Liberal Federation has got the entire intelligentsia in the country behind it and the voice raised by the Liberal Federation is the voice raised by the intelligentsia in the country. (Hear, hear) I do not see why we are so pessimistic about this. I think Liberals are the men who have got resources. Those who are opposed to help Britain have nothing but false propaganda and I am sure that they cannot in any way come to the help of Britain. At any rate as far as the Congress is concerned, they may help or may not help but I am clear in my mind that the interest of the country lies in supporting the Allies not because that we have any love for them but because we have love for our own country. (Hear, hear) And it is for the salvation of our country that we have decided to help the Allies. As a matter of fact I was waiting to see after the assumption of office by the Congress in various provinces, a day when unity will prevail in every province but the result is that the country has so become disunited that one looks askance at another. Today India needs the blessing of every single individual of this country and without the blessings and hearty co-operation of each and every individual of the country, we should not claim independence, Dominion Status, Swaraj or anything. I think the Congress has taken the country years back (hear, hear) for the attainment of Swaraj by the policy which it has advocated. Sir, I wholeheartedly support the resolution moved by my friend, Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh.

#### Rai Bahadur Babu Bhagwati Saran Singh

Supporting the resolution in a Hindi speech, Rai Bahadur Babu Bhagwati Saran Singh, *raia* of Anapur (Allahabad district), said that the different aspects of the question had been placed before them by the previous speakers—Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, Mr J. N. Basu and Kunwar Guru Narain. Indian culture and civilization were very ancient and they were all proud of them. They had been taught from their infancy that they should render help to all who were needy and in trouble. It was expected of them to help even birds and animals if they were found to be in danger. Indians had as their ancestors persons like Shri Rama Chandra, Yudhister, *rishis* and *munis* and they had been taught not to shirk their duty. A friend in trouble should be helped without any reserve and it would be very selfish on their part if they thought of striking a bargain as a condition precedent for any help they would give. It must be remembered that they had relations with England for the last 150 years. It was not for him on that occasion to discuss whether the British were good or bad. The whole of the country knew very well what the British were or had been.

The question they had to consider was whether they wanted the Germans to be victorious in the war and preferred German rule to that of the British. From whatever little they had heard about the German methods of administration,

into a military Leviathan to which all human happiness has to be subordinated. It is against this ideology that democracies are fighting. If this type of ideology were only confined to Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy we in India and other parts of the world may have very little to say. Like Bolshevism this Nazi spirit threatens to break loose and envelope in the first instance the whole of Europe.

My friend, Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, has given you an idea of how Austria fell, then Sudetanland on another pretext, then Czechoslovakia, then Danzig, then the Corridor and then Poland. God knows whose turn will be next. Fired by the same spirit, Russia which was so far lying dormant stabbed Poland in the back even while she was fighting against the aggressor and was herself half dead. Then under the Soviet influence fell the Baltic States and today even Sweden and Norway are threatened. It is against that spirit of aggression that the Allies are fighting. We are not helping merely Britain and France, we are helping the cause of democracy by which we mean liberty of the individual which is denied in the totalitarian State. The liberty to enable one to realize the highest and the best that is within himself. Ladies and gentlemen, you notice a motto in this hall which reads "Liberty is not a means to a higher end, it is in itself the highest political end. If one could presume to improve upon that, one would say that liberty is a means to an end and that end is the realization of the highest and the best that is in a human being, that is what democracy stands for and that is what Fascism and Nazism deny today. We are fighting this cause not merely to help Britain but to relieve the world of this mental terror of war. It is all very well for us to say secure 6000 miles away from the main theatres of war, that war is a horrible thing but you can never realize how very horrible it is unless you study the day to day developments in the various victim countries unless you study how humanity suffers through it and unless you understand how even safety measures such as evacuation break up millions of family ties. Not until one understands this well one will appreciate the true terror of war.

Let me give you one illustration. It is estimated that in the course of the four years of the last war some 500 tons of explosive bombs were dropped on civil population. The same can be done in 24 hours today. It is this terror in which the people of the world live, a terror which Nazism and Fascism are making more and more horrible day after day, that the democratic countries have set their faces against. Do not look at this problem from the point of view that you are helping Great Britain because you are within the British Empire. Ladies and gentlemen, I appeal to you therefore, whenever you can to preach cooperation in war as if it were your mission to preach it that we should help Britain not for the sake of Britain but for the sake of democracy, for the sake of liberty for the sake of freedom of thought, for the sake of enabling the peoples of the world to realize the highest that is in themselves. Tell them that in the humiliation of democracies will be India's disgrace, in their destruction will be India's loss and in their rehabilitation will be our reward.

**Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru**

*The Hon. Dr. H. N. Kunzru* (Allahabad). Mr. President, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, there can be no two opinions with regard to the points contained in the first paragraph of this resolution. I am sure we are

all united in our condemnation of totalitarian policies and in our sympathy with the victims of totalitarian aggression. Since 1931 up to the present time there has been absolutely no doubt in anybody's mind on that point. Since *Manchukuo* was invaded by Japan, we have realized the danger of the doctrine that is being preached by certain important countries, the doctrine that might is right. Every instance of aggression since 1931 has evoked resentment on our part against the aggressors and sympathy with those who were the victims of aggression. This was notably the case in respect of Czechoslovakia and Poland. It is no less so in respect of Finland which has been wintonly attacked by Russia. In these circumstances that is when we find that the weaker states are at the mercy of the stronger states that the principles of justice and toleration are being set at naught and that human values are being regarded as of no account, it is natural, I would repeat, that we should be on the side of those who are fighting against Nazi aggression. We feel that the larger interests of India and indeed of the whole world are bound up with the success of those who stand up for democracy and freedom. It is true that some countries which have been deprived of their independence, were not democratic for instance, Poland did not enjoy the blessing of a democratic government but it had its own government. It was the business of the Poles themselves to have a better government but whatever the character of the government of Poland might have been, Germany could not have a shadow of justification for attacking it and crushing its independence. We feel that if the Nazi policies were to gain ascendancy throughout the world, it is not merely Europe but the entire world including India would suffer. We would suffer in a special degree because of our intimate connection with Europe and with one of the greatest European powers, England. What can be more natural than that in this position we should naturally be willing to help Great Britain and France and appeal to our countrymen to help them? We recognize, however, that whatever our intellectual recognition of the principles at stake might be, our appeals will not have the desired effect, will fail of their purpose unless the British Government too on their part adopt a policy which would warm the hearts of the people of India and enable them to extend their wholehearted support to Britain and France. Some people might be inclined to think that we were using England's difficulties in order to strike a bargain with her. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth than such a charge. I am not afraid of the word bargain. But as a matter of fact I do not think that our attitude can be characterized as a bargain. We all of us can ask ourselves whether we feel for the Allies to the same extent as the Britons or Frenchmen or Canadians or Australians. If we do so, we shall have to admit honestly that our sympathies for the Allied cause are not as warm as those of the people that I have just mentioned. Why is it so? Why do we not feel complete identity of interests with them? It is because of our present political condition. Now suppose at this juncture Britain were to come forward and say that she would help India to achieve her freedom rapidly, enable her to travel quickly towards Dominion Status, can you not imagine what a wave of enthusiasm would be created throughout the country by that announcement? However willing you might be to help Great Britain now, even the staunchest and most unconditional supporters of Britain would feel their pulses quickened and their hearts beat more warmly for Great Britain and France if they felt that the cause of the Allies was not merely in an intellectual and remote way but also in a concrete and vital way, that of India. There would then be that complete

cooperation which the well wishers of both England and Great Britain would desire

Let alone Dominion Status Suppose Britain were to come forward now and announce a change in its military policy in this country I personally attach far more weight to this than to abstract declarations regarding the future status of India I hold the same views on this subject that have been given expression to by our distinguished President in his address Suppose Great Britain were to change its policy radically, be ready to nationalize the Indian army and prepare India fully for self-defence, that, in my opinion, would be the greatest guarantee that England has finally made up its mind to part with power and make India selfgoverning Would you not in such a position feel far more warmly for England and France than you do at the present time? And would you not then with courage and conviction, go forward and ask your countrymen to give unstinted support to Great Britain in this crisis? If you meet with opponents you could meet them on the ground of patriotism you could appeal to your countrymen as lovers of freedom, as patriots to identify themselves completely with the democracies Recognizing this the Liberal Federation is not content with appealing to the people of India to help Great Britain but asks England also to recognize that its appeal will meet with success only to the extent that Great Britain changes its policy This is a psychological question I recognize in an intellectual way that the cause for which England and France are fighting, is just Nevertheless today if a war loan were started or an organization were formed to encourage recruitment, I would fight shy frankly speaking, of asking my countrymen to subscribe liberally to the loan or to join the army in large numbers I would hesitate to support warmly appeals in favour of the war loan or in favour of recruitment because I would have to ask myself at every step whether there was any reasonable assurance that we would be regarded by the world at large as free men fighting freely in defence of freedom If we have Indian officers in our army then our army going out of our country would be regarded as a national army fighting for a cause which the Indian nation believed in But so long as the Indian army is officered by Englishmen, can any country and even the countries whom we are prepared to help, wholeheartedly regard our army otherwise than as mercenary? They might feel grateful to England for having sent the Indian army outside India but they could hardly feel grateful to us for the help that our army was rendering It is to change this situation in order to bring about a mental metamorphosis throughout the country and to produce those psychological conditions in which India could throw herself wholeheartedly into the struggle, that we, while recognizing the justice of the allied cause and wishing to help them, at the same time ask Great Britain to realize the conditions under which alone our appeals can be successful It is only in the measure that Great Britain changes its policy, as the resolution says, towards the future of India that it will meet with a full and enthusiastic response from Indians in the prosecution of the struggle in which it is engaged to a successful issue

*The resolution was put and carried unanimously*

#### VICEROY'S STATEMENT

Before the next resolution on the Viceroy's statement was taken up the President said We have a long programme to get through and I hope

speakers will limit the length of their speeches as far as possible. I do not wish to lay down any hard and fast lines. I hope speakers will understand it themselves.

### Mr V N Chandavarkar

*Mr V N Chandavarkar (Bombay)* I beg to move the following resolution —

The National Liberal Federation of India, having fully considered the statement issued by His Excellency the Viceroy and subsequent official statements, both in England and India, is strongly of opinion that they are quite unsatisfactory inasmuch as they

- (a) do not go beyond the position taken up in 1917 and imply the postponement of the advent of Dominion Status to an indefinite and distant future and do not envisage its achievement within a definite period in the near future
- (b) leave the centre irresponsible as it is at present,
- (c) give to the minority communities a virtual veto on future constitutional progress
- (d) make the admission of a larger Indian element into the Viceroy's Executive Council conditional on the settlement of the communal problem in the provinces although this was not a condition precedent to the establishment of Federation under the Government of India Act, 1935
- (e) ignore the urgent need for the rapid nationalization of the Defence forces in all their branches

(2) The Consultative Committee as proposed by the Viceroy, the object of which was to win Indian support in the prosecution of war could be no substitute for responsibility at the centre and therefore failed to appeal to the people

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen you must have read on the agenda paper before you that the proposition was to be moved by my friend, the hon Mr Saprú. You in the United Provinces have got a special and a very just reputation for being very polite. We in Bombay are a rough sort of people in our manners. We do not miss opportunities when they come to us. My friend Mr Saprú who was put down as a speaker in the first instance said to me, 'Mr Chandavarkar, I want you to move the resolution about the Viceroy's statement. I did not want to miss the opportunity of moving an important resolution nor waste time by saying, 'You take it up.' So I readily agreed. But unfortunately the general secretary who was not aware of the conversation between Mr Saprú and myself put down Mr Saprú's name as the mover. And the President ruled that I should stand by the arrangement made with Mr Saprú and that I should speak. Sir here I stand in obedience to your command. Those that were in the subjects committee know that the third paragraph of the first resolution was originally in the draft prepared by the reception committee the last paragraph of the resolution which it is now my privilege to move.

Now, before I come to the resolution I would like to refer to a question which is very often asked—what is the difference between you Liberals and the Congress men as far as the attitude towards the war and the Viceroy's statement is concerned? You are as extreme as the Congress. The Congress is more



honest, you Liberals are afraid of displeasing the British Government and therefore try to camouflage your attitude by all sorts of statements and qualifications. My reply is, our attitude is quite clear. Whatever psychology may say, whatever philosophy may say, whatever political science may say, we know where we stand. We take the view that situated as we are at present we are in a helpless position. We cannot dictate to the British Government, leave alone the question of making a bargain or even a conditional bargain. So whatever our motive may be, we say from the point of view of enlightened selfishness that we have to stand by the British. We have no other alternative but to stand by the British because the bogey of Russian invasion over the frontier is already facing us and disturbing the minds of many people. While we are talking here, we are hearing of the establishment of air bases not far away from our frontier and now if we go into psychology and philosophy and political science and tell the British that they must do this and they must do that before we help them, our position will be very precarious indeed. So it is purely from the point of view of the safety of the country, if for nothing else we must help the British to win the war. Incidentally there is the moral issue involved. But the moral issue and the selfish issue go together. Therefore, speaking for myself, if a war loan is floated or if there is an appeal for recruitment, I shall say, subscribe to the war loan freely and join the army in large numbers.

Now I come to the resolution. The resolution begins with the Viceroy's statement and the first point is regarding Dominion Status. We who know the old days, when we were young and were connected with the old Congress, had heard of our old demand for colonial self government. From the year 1885 or rather from the year Lord Ripon started his policy of liberalising the local self government system or even before that, the policy of the British Government has always been understood to be that at a certain stage we were to be given freedom to manage our own affairs. So Dominion Status or self government are not new ideals. Only the term Dominion Status has acquired a new significance, a special significance, under the Statute of Westminster. The policy of the British Government, at least then declared policy, is that they propose to give us the right to manage our own affairs at a certain definite period. But the real position is that even in the year of grace 1939 we do not know where we are. We are living on promises. Lord Samuel in one of the most brilliant speeches on the Indian question delivered in the British Parliament since the days perhaps of Charles Bradlaugh referred to a Biblical quotation, "Man never is but is always to be blessed." He referred to this quotation with special reference to the attitude of the British Government towards the question of grant of Dominion Status to India. The attitude of the British Government seems to be that Dominion Status is never to be given but is always to be promised to India. Even we who are in favour of the British connection, have as a result of successive disappointments begun to doubt whether the attitude of the British Government is really sincere, and whether they are holding out promises to India which they do not mean to carry out. There are statesmen like Lord Samuel and the late Mr. Montagu who have done what they could to see this promise is fulfilled, but there are other people who are holding back the hands of the British Government and are trying to postpone the grant of Dominion Status. Our attitude towards the Viceroy's statement is that it does not go much beyond what Mr. Montagu said in 1917 or the Balfour Declaration. The Viceroy's statement from the point of view of a declaration of policy is very

inadequate and unsatisfactory and our most serious objection to it is that it leads us nowhere regarding the realization of our ideal of responsibility at the centre. Sir C Y Chintamani, speaking in Bombay in 1931 in one of the most brilliant addresses it has been my pleasure to listen to said, "Federation or no federation, there must be responsibility at the centre". Although we have responsibility in the provinces there has been no move to introduce responsibility at the centre. As a result of the war the question of federation has been put on the shelf. The Viceroy in trying to find a solution to the problem has made no reference to the question of responsibility at the centre but has tried to secure a working arrangement, but even this arrangement was hedged in by so many difficult conditions. The first condition was that there must be an agreement with the minorities.

- Sir, with your permission I shall deal with the paragraphs (c) and (d) of the resolution later and just refer passingly to the question of the nationalization of the defence forces. I am not going to speak on this point at great length because there is a special resolution on the subject. But the point in having this clause here is this, that we realize that the talk of Dominion Status is all moonshine when we are not in a position to defend ourselves. If the British people are really sincere in their desire to give us Dominion Status they ought to give proof of their sincerity by taking definite steps towards the nationalization of the army. It is useless to talk about Dominion Status unless a country is able to defend itself. Taking advantage of this war they should take up recruitment by asking volunteers to join the army, by expanding the University Training Corps in various universities, by expanding the Indian Territorial Force, in short they should build up a citizen army who will fight not because they receive Rs 25 or Rs 23 a month but because they know that the safety of the country is in danger. Unless we have a national citizen army we shall not be able to keep Dominion Status even if granted to us for 24 hours.

enables England to stand as a nation in times of emergency. It has made the British a disciplined people, discipline which comes from within, discipline of a free people who socially are one whatever their religious differences may be. Why has England reached such a position?—Because they know how to work with people with different views and they know that essentials count more in a nation's life than non-essentials and it is the only way in which a democracy can work. We have seen that the Congress party has sometimes worked the party system in a very offensive way to the people who do not agree with them, but we expected this. We did not expect that in the beginning we would have a perfect system of administration. In spite of all that they have done I would rather go through this misery than go back to the bureaucratic system of administration or the artificial system of administration where people are brought together because they belong to the Hindu community, the Muslim community, or the depressed classes. It is nothing but a perpetuation of the abominable caste and communal system that has ruined this country and we shall never get out of this abomination unless we forget to think in terms of caste and community and we begin to think in terms of India and Indians. I was told once in a public gathering that I did not realise realities. It is high time we began to repeat the platitude of our political ancestors, the forefathers of the Congress, rather than the platitudes of the present leaders of the Congress. Sir, I attach the greatest importance to this question, the minority problem. We are being asked to face realities. We faced realities at the Lucknow Congress in 1916 and the Lucknow Pact in 1916 was hailed as a great political charter like the Magna Charta of England. We know what that Pact has led us to. What was a minority problem has become a problem of nationalities. We are now told that it is not a question of minorities, but it is now a question of nationalities. That is, a country like India which for the last 50 years we have been claiming to be one nation, it is now said, consists of two nations—one Mahomedan India and the other Hindu India. If we encourage the cry, the idea will get hold of the people and God knows what may happen. We must stifle this monster now and the only reason why I belong to the Liberal party, why in spite of our poverty of numbers I am anxious that the Liberal party should continue, is because I feel that our hands have been very clean in this matter. We should continue on our path to give a lead to the country and tell the country we cannot talk of Dominion Status, leave alone independence, if we are going to think of this country in terms of Mahomedan India and Hindu India. Hindustan belongs to all of us irrespective of caste, creed or religion. We as Liberals should discourage any attempt made by the Congress or the British Government to tell us that unless we can solve this problem there can be no political freedom in this country. This problem is going to solve itself. It was my privilege to be connected with a big educational organization for the last six years. I know the younger generation are free from this communal virus. Left to themselves, they do not worry about these matters. If the present generation is not going to forsake the ideal of unity I am sure in another 20 years the problem will be solved on a different basis altogether. We must once for all tell the British that it is not honest to make the settlement of the so-called minority problem a condition of political settlement.

I admit we have differences. Did not the British have differences in England? In the year 1908 when I went to England the Eucharist Congress

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I now come to the problem of problems, the so-called problem of minorities. Whatever the British Government may have done in the past we, sir, cannot deny that we have been equally responsible in creating this problem and keeping it alive and making it a cancer, such a cancer that all of us, sometimes even the most enlightened among us are affected by it. What was the Viceroy's position? The Viceroy said, 'I am willing to expand the Executive Council but you must come to a communal settlement in the provinces,' the implication there being I presume that the Congress Governments should take nominees of minorities in their Cabinets although these nominees would not subscribe to the Congress faith. That, I take it, is the grievance against the Congress. In my address last year delivered as the President of the Provincial Liberal Conference at Satara perhaps I gave a lead in attacking the Congress Governments. But I should like to congratulate the Congress Party on the correct attitude taken by them in declining to accept this suggestion from the Viceroy. (Heat, hear). We want self-government but it must be really self-government, that is, a government by the people by discussion, by association of people holding more or less the same views, the same ideals. It is no use referring to Switzerland and to other continental countries. We have been connected with the British. We know what parliamentary democracy is and we find that whatever defects there may be in the British democracy, it is the one democracy that has stood the test of time, it is the one democracy that

enables England to stand as a nation in times of emergency. It has made the British a disciplined people, discipline which comes from within, discipline of a free people who socially are one whatever their religious differences may be. Why has England reached such a position?—Because they know how to work with people with different views and they know that essentials count more in a nation's life than non-essentials and it is the only way in which a democracy can work. We have seen that the Congress party has sometimes worked the party system in a very offensive way to the people who do not agree with them, but we expected this. We did not expect that in the beginning we would have a perfect system of administration. In spite of all that they have done I would rather go through this misery than go back to the bureaucratic system of administration or the artificial system of administration where people are brought together because they belong to the Hindu community, the Muslim community, or the depressed classes. It is nothing but a perpetuation of the abominable caste and communal system that has ruined this country and we shall never get out of this abomination unless we forget to think in terms of caste and community and we begin to think in terms of India and Indians. I was told once in a public gathering that I did not realise realities. It is high time we begin to repeat the platitude of our political ancestors, the forefathers of the Congress, rather than the platitudes of the present leaders of the Congress. Sir, I attach the greatest importance to this question, the minority problem. We are being asked to face realities. We faced realities at the Lucknow Congress in 1916 and the Lucknow Pact in 1916 was hailed as a great political charter like the Magna Charta of England. We know what that Pact has led us to. What was a minority problem has become a problem of nationalities. We are now told that it is not a question of minorities, but it is now a question of nationalities. That is, a country like India which for the last 50 years we have been claiming to be one nation, it is now said, consists of two nations, one Mahomedan India and the other Hindu India. If we encourage the cry, the idea will get hold of the people and God knows what may happen. We must stifle this monster now and the only reason why I belong to the Liberal party, why in spite of our poverty of numbers I am anxious that the Liberal party should continue, is because I feel that our hands have been very clean in this matter. We should continue on our path to give a lead to the country and tell the country we cannot talk of Dominion Status, leave alone independence, if we are going to think of this country in terms of Mahomedan India and Hindu India. Hindustan belongs to all of us irrespective of caste, creed or religion. We as Liberals should discourage any attempt made by the Congress or the British Government to tell us that unless we can solve this problem there can be no political freedom in this country. This problem is going to solve itself. It was my privilege to be connected with a big educational organization for the last six years. I know the younger generation are free from this communal virus. Left to themselves, they do not worry about these matters. If the present generation is not going to forsake the ideal of unity I am sure in another 20 years the problem will be solved on a different basis altogether. We must once for all tell the British that it is not honest to make the settlement of the so-called minority problem a condition of political settlement.

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procession was banned by the Asquith Government as the result of agitation carried on by the High Church people. The procession was not allowed to go along certain streets in London. There were the disabilities of the Roman Catholics and their persecution. *But let us not despair and despond and say that we are perpetually to be divided on these communal or religious lines and that we are not one nation.*

The only thing left is the Consultative Committee. What was offered should not have been accepted and I am glad that neither the Congress nor the Liberals nor the Muslim League nor the Hindu Sabha accepted this offer of the Viceroy. Either we are to associate with the conduct of the war as equals or let the British Government or the bureaucrats carry on the war, but we shall have no responsibility for the conduct of the war. What we stand for is the direct association of the Indians in the conduct of the war, that means, in the Executive Government. If such an offer had been made certainly it would have been considered. No doubt such an offer has been made but on a wrong basis. *The solution of the communal problem in the provinces was made a condition precedent.* That is why that offer was rightly rejected.

after the war had been declared His Majesty's Government should have come out with a declaration of an imaginative character, but the British Government is singularly lacking in imagination. That was not done. The situation was allowed to drift, and when pressed by the most important political organization in the country to make a declaration of their aims—the demand for a declaration was implicit also in the resolution passed by our Working Committee in Bombay—the Viceroy came out with a long statement, the sincerity of which I do not question but the wisdom of which I gravely doubt. (Applause) I have read the declaration with the respect which is due to His Excellency and I regret to have to say that it is a most unimaginative document. It does not carry us beyond the position envisaged for us in 1917. Britain is to be the arbiter of our destinies. Progressive realization of responsible government, Britain being the judge of the time and measure of each advance, is still to be the goal of India. Dominion Status is to be the ultimate issue of India's destiny. Well, do you wonder that that declaration has appealed to no patriotic Indian? Not only has that declaration failed to appeal to my patriotic Indian, but it has failed to appeal to all reasonably liberal-minded Englishmen. It was attacked in language of great eloquence by that most eminent of living British Liberal statesmen, Viscount Samuel. In a speech of great eloquence, he criticized that declaration in a manner in which it has not been criticized even by the Liberal party of India. We have been told by British Conservatives that they are disappointed with the attitude of the Liberal party. My answer to that line of criticism is that we are Liberals and not Conservatives. If the resolutions of my party could be blessed by the *Times* I would be sorry. I would then begin to think that I was a Conservative and not a Liberal. But I find that our attitude is rightly understood by British radicals like Lord Samuel, my old friend, Mr. Wilfred Roberts who has greatly distinguished himself in Parliament and who is a Liberal member. Sir Walter Layton, by the *Manchester Guardian*, by the *News Chronicle*, by the *Daily Herald* and the Liberal and Labour press. There is nothing wrong, there is nothing unreasonable in asking that our status should be assured at this critical moment in our nation's history.

I will now with your permission point out what our principal criticisms against the declaration are. I have already pointed out that the declaration does not carry us beyond the position taken up in 1917. We in the Liberal party have not claimed that we should be the sole arbiters of our destiny, but we have certainly stood for the position that we should have an effective share in determining our own destiny. I even that effective share has been denied to us in this declaration. Point No 2 is that dominion status still remains only the ultimate issue. There is no definite time by which Dominion Status is to be established. There is no word even to indicate that progress towards Dominion Status will be accelerated. All that has happened is that federation which no one liked has been ditched, not in order to meet the Congress point of view or the Hindu point of view or the Liberal point of view but in order to meet the point of view of the minorities and the Indian princes. The centre has been left irresponsible at present. Now we know what the difficulties of working the present irresponsible centre are. Even when we want to support the Government we cannot support the Government. The centre today is a very weak centre and you cannot conduct a big war with a weak centre like this. When we had discussions on the Defence of India Bill we found great difficulty in supporting the Bill. We knew that if we were a

regard to minority rights and majority rights. It must make up its mind in regard to treaty rights of princes and the moral rights of their subjects. In regard to all these matters it must make up its mind and we should also have concrete detailed plans ready. I think hard thinking, constructive thinking is necessary on our part. It is no use attacking one party or the other. We all need to pool our resources together. It is for this reason that I have greatly deplored certain recent manifestations of Muslim hysteria. I have greatly deplored for this reason the "deliverance day" of the Muslim Mahatma, Mr Jinnah. (Laughter) I had very great respect for Mr Jinnah. He had done eminent services to the country in the past, but in the evening of his life he has been going back on the principles of a lifetime. I wish that it had been left to him to contribute to the solution of this problem. He is a powerful man, he is a great man, and I would appeal to him to apply his mind in a more constructive manner to the problem of India. I would ask him to emulate not the example of his follower, Mr Fazlul Huq of Bengal who changes his mind every alternate day (laughter), but of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan who in these difficult days has proved to be a responsible statesman. With these words I give my support to the resolution.

#### Rao Raja Dr Shyam Behari Misra

*Raj Bahadur Rao Raja Dr Shyam Behari Misra* (Lucknow) supporting the resolution in Hindi said that the two previous speakers had explained at great length why the Viceroy's statement and the subsequent statements of British statesmen had not been accepted by any party in India. Everyone anxiously awaited the Viceregal pronouncement, but when actually made it disappointed all. There was nothing in it to enthuse them and no material advance had been promised with a view to altering the existing situation in the country.

Referring to the question of India's political status, Dr Misra said that man by nature wanted to be free and so was the case with nations. To realize that goal two things were necessary: firstly they had to achieve independence and secondly, after becoming independent they had to possess the power to retain their independence. If India could become independent and be able to retain her independence there was no harm and in fact they would all whole heartedly welcome it. The Liberal party being a realistic body felt that in the existing condition of things it was a very difficult thing to make India independent and even if she attained independence it would be next to impossible for her to retain her independence for long. Even if the British left the country of their own free will they would not be able to manage their own affairs smoothly.

The speaker explained that he was constrained to say this in view of the recent communal outbreaks, the attempt made by one community to cut the throat of the other. That was the reason why the Liberals as practical men and not as *khushamdis* pressed for Dominion Status for India. Though for most of his life he was a Government servant he would most gladly work for securing an independent status for India if he felt sure that they would be able to preserve that status for any length of time. But as he was quite certain that they would not be able to do so he stood for Dominion Status. It greatly pained him to find that even for the attainment of Dominion Status all sorts of obstacles were being placed in their way. The words 'Dominion Status' of course could not have found place in the Minto Morley reforms. The British fought shy of



using them even in the Montford reforms scheme. Not only that, even now there was no definite pronouncement promising Dominion Status to India in the near future. So many restrictions and safeguards were being imposed that it appeared practically impossible that India would ever attain the status of a dominion. It was this feeling of disgust and pessimism that made the Congress lay down the reins of office in the various provinces where they were in charge of government and adopt an attitude of non-cooperation.

The Liberals never favoured a policy of non-cooperation. But he agreed with the view expressed by his friend, Dr. Hriday Nath Kunzru, that though they all wanted and were willing to help Britain in the present war something should also be done by Britain to make them enthusiastic in supporting her cause. It was essential that the goodwill of Indians should be secured on the side of Britain. If Indians knew that after the conclusion of the war they would secure for themselves the rights for which they were now asked to fight shoulder to shoulder with England, they could then help her with greater vigour and enthusiasm. India had a vast population with immense resources and if she threw her whole weight on the side of the Allies, the war would be won in no time and the whole of Europe not to speak of Germany could be thrown into the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean. (Laughter and applause)

Referring to the Hindu-Muslim differences the speaker said that this dispute had existed during the whole of his life and he could say from his long experience that the two communities were never very great friends. But there was no doubt that the relations between individual Hindus and Muslims were cordial and good, at least they were ostensibly so. However, thanks to the fanatical preaching of Muslim leaders like Mr. Jinnah, there was a feeling of hatred and distrust between the two communities at the present time. He was sure that this was not the state of affairs formerly. The British statesmen were responsible to a large extent for the creation and the perpetuation of the problem of problems, the minority problem. He would not go so far as to assert that the problem had been created with the mischievous motive of divide and rule, but he would definitely say that it was the direct result of their shortsighted policy. India was being painted to the world as a land of minorities. It should be remembered that India was called Hindusthan and the Hindus formed the majority of the population. Hindus had been able to survive the onslaughts of Muslims for 700 years and it was wrong for Muslims to believe that they would succeed in crushing Hindus with the help of the British. Dr. M. R. was confident that there was no chance whatsoever of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity in the real sense. The Hindus would remain Hindus at any cost. He was even prepared to accept what was called the Pakistan scheme. If Muslims wanted it, let India be divided into Hindu India and Muslim India, but the fact remained that the Muslim community could never become the majority community in Hindusthan.

Concluding, the speaker pointed out that there was not much enthusiasm among Indians at the present moment in connection with the European war. He urged that it was the duty of Britain to create a friendly and favourable atmosphere and Indians in their turn would not fail to respond with enthusiasm and render all possible help they could to enable Britain to win the war. (Applause)

*President* I must mention that Mr Shroff wants that the whole resolution with the exception of (c) should be adopted by the Federation. I do not think that that is a possible amendment to this resolution. If you like I can take those various parts in separate portions for voting. But I hope he does not press that amendment.

*The resolution was put and carried, two voting against it*

## DOMINION STATUS

Mr. J N Basu

Mr J N Basu (Calcutta) moved

This Federation strongly urges (1) that the Government of India Act of 1935 should be so amended

(a) as to provide for the establishment of complete responsible government in the provinces and for a federal basis at the Centre so that India may automatically become a Dominion within the meaning of the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and of the Statute of Westminster on the conclusion of the war and

(b) as to secure to the subjects of States the right of election of State representatives

(2) That in the meanwhile immediate steps should be taken to nationalize the army so as to enable India to shoulder the responsibility of Dominion Status

*Mr Basu* It is a matter of deep regret that in these days it should be necessary to urge such a resolution in a political assembly in India. This resolution desires to give expression to the feeling that has prevailed in India with greater or less intensity ever since the British connection with this country began. That feeling is the desire of the people to be masters of their own homes, to have the control of their own destinies and of their own future. We have wanted that our affairs should not be regulated with an eye to the interests of any other outside body, that our affairs should be regulated according to our needs, our ideals and our requirements.

Sir, you will notice that we lay stress on the expression 'Dominion Status'. As we ordinarily understand it, Dominion Status implies not only that we should be a free state but also that we should be included in that commonwealth of free states which is known as the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is, I believe, not necessary to tell you as to why it is necessary that we should desire to form part of such a strong combination of nations. We want protection from outside attacks, in various ways we want advantages which standing all by ourselves we could not possibly have at the present moment. You have to look at our wide seaboard and at our vulnerable frontiers. You will immediately appreciate that it is difficult for us at the present moment to successfully meet attacks at those points. We should also think that when we associate ourselves with a strong body of nations we can assist in bringing about ultimately a world understanding which will gradually abolish aggressions and aggrandisements at the expense of weaker and smaller nations. The beginning has to be made. An attempt was made with the League of Nations, but it has failed. So far as the British Commonwealth of Nations is concerned, it has gone on successfully so far, and with a little liberalising of its ideals and its policy there is no reason why it should not be a centre emanating peace influences throughout the world.

As to what is Dominion Status is a question that engaged the attention of the self governing colonies, of the dominions of Great Britain for a great many years. There were Imperial Conferences which the representatives of the various dominions attended and there was discussion as to what should be the status, standing and powers of these various dominions. It was generally felt by these dominions that they should be in the position of free and independent states. The only thing connecting them was their allegiance to one empire. There was the Balfour Declaration, which was not really a declaration by Lord Balfour but the report of a committee of the Imperial Conference over which Lord Balfour presided. I shall read out just one sentence from that report which will give you an idea of what it decided. Speaking of the British dominions, it stated that they are autonomous communities within the British empire equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united in common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

You will notice what the implication is in the expression Dominion Status. It affords an opportunity for association of independent states, independent not only as regards their own domestic affairs but also as regards their connection with outsiders. The acceptance of that view has led some of the states to have their own representatives in foreign countries. Canada has her own representatives and the Irish Free State has its own representatives in other countries instead of being represented by the British Ministry or the British agent. The question of secession was discussed. In fact before the Balfour Declaration there were in the Union of South Africa political parties who wanted the right of secession as one of the rights that these component states should have. General Hertzog was the leader of one party which favoured that the component parts should have the power of secession. The other party was represented by General Smuts who lost after two elections. So it was also a live issue and it was understood to be a live issue but South Africa, a large part of which had fought Britain tooth and nail only a few years previously, found that it was beneficial to that State that it should continue to be a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. That is what is meant by the Balfour Declaration.

As regards the Statute of Westminster it merely gave legislative sanction to a state of things that had been accepted both by Britain and by the dominions which were self governing. In one of the sections of that statute it said that it should have power to make laws for extra territorial operation. It was necessary that such a statute should be passed. Canada had passed a law that there should be no appeal to the British Privy Council in any criminal case. The matter was taken up to the Privy Council in a certain case and the British Privy Council held that it was a law which Canada had no right to pass. So it was necessary that the doubts should be set at rest and the independent position of these dominions should be placed beyond doubt. Various other things contributed to the measure which ultimately became the Statute of Westminster. If the Statute of Westminster is applied to India, then India would be for all practical purposes a completely free nation, a nation that would regulate her own economic, fiscal and administrative policy, and what is more important, a matter that is referred to in the second part of this resolution, it

would be a nation completely provided with power to organise and look after its own defence

Suppose we were at the present moment a free country, where are the essentials that would give us strength to stand the onslaughts of outsiders. We have no properly equipped army and navy led by Indians and under their command to protect our coasts and boundaries. That is the position—a position which is extremely disheartening to every Indian. If we attain Dominion Status as Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa have done, then we will have the power to have our own army and navy according to our own needs. You can have the necessary armaments, you can train your own men in the way that you may desire them to be trained, so that your country may be protected from outside attacks. You will be masters of your own home in a fuller sense. That is the Dominion Status that we ask for and that is a kind of constitution which Britain should long ago have thought of adopting for this country. As I have said already I regret that in these days it should be necessary for us to repeat the demand. There is no section of the people of India that stands in the way of our becoming a powerful state fully capable of defending itself. For any section of the people not to want that such freedom should come to us practically amounts to its requesting to a position that all affairs instead of being conducted in our interests should be conducted for somebody else's interest. That is a state of things which must be stopped and should not be allowed to continue. With these words I place the resolution before you for your acceptance.

### Rai Bahadur Thakur Hanuman Singh

Rai Bahadur Thakur Hanuman Singh (Dumraon). Mr President brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I have been called upon by the Chair to second the resolution which has been placed before you. I do not wish to repeat what has already been said by Mr Bisu. But I wish to add a few words to his statement which you have just heard from him. To begin with, I have to say that the British rule has been most injurious to the interests of Indians in respect of our military training. From the beginning of the British raj Government never thought to give an opportunity to Indians to enter the army and to rise to the top of the army. At present all the army is officered by Europeans and our own countrymen have to play a secondary part. How can the martial spirit of the people improve under such circumstances? They know that the credit will go to the British. Unless a fighter knows that in the field the credit will be his or his country's, real martial spirit cannot be shown. Although our martial spirit has been deteriorating owing to the circumstances of the country, I make bold to say that the Government should give us opportunities and we will prove to be the best soldiers in the whole world. Even under the present circumstances in which our soldiers have to fight, Britishers have borne testimony to the fact that the Indian soldiers are equal to any task with which they may be face to face.

Then there is another important question. The Government has been pleased to divide the Indian population into two classes, one the martial class and the other the non martial class. If every class had an opportunity to enter the army then there would be martial spirit in every class. As it is, excluding Muhammadans and Europeans who have been domiciled here or descendants of their forefathers among Indians who served in the army, the martial spirit

is confined to a certain portion of the race and the martial spirit of others remains dormant. Unless India gets more opportunities to serve in the army she will always be helpless to protect her hearths and homes. As Mr Kunzru said, if India were to get full control of the army, Dominion Status will come by itself. I quite agree with him. Unless we get opportunities to officer our army and help our men to the fighting front, we cannot expect to protect India from foreign aggressions. We should know that other nations have an eye on India. I read two or three days ago that Russians have an eye on India. That is not a new thing. Therefore it is very necessary that we should agitate and get reforms in the army. There have been several committees appointed by the Government, but all the reports which were submitted were mostly against Indians and anything which was in favour of Indians was not considered worth giving.

There is one part of the resolution which is to give representation to the peoples of the states. Unless the peoples of the states be the elected representatives, the Central Government will always remain a conservative government. Therefore it is also very necessary that the representatives of the states in the central government, the Federal Government you may call it, should be elected representatives and not nominated. With these few words I second the resolution.

#### Professor R H Kelkar

*Professor R H Kelkar (Poona)* —Mr President and brother-delegates, in proposing this resolution Mr Basu has so ably explained the implications of Dominion Status that I need not add any remarks of my own on this particular point. Dominion Status has been the goal which has been systematically placed before the country by this party and to a gathering of Liberals therefore there is no necessity to explain why I am supporting this particular part of the resolution. There are only two little additions made to the goal. One is that the Central Government should be a Federal Government. We have accepted that basis in order that the unity of India which we all desire should be a perfect unity. Indian India should not be excluded from our purview. Eleven years ago I remember the day when in this very hall I supported a resolution on the question of Indian states. Then I had some difficulty in persuading my fellow Liberals that this was an important item. But during the last few years the problem has assumed such proportions that no body has any doubts whatsoever that the states must come in and the states can only come in at the present moment by way of federation. The only other possible way is to abolish the states altogether. That would be revolutionary and I am quite sure that no Liberal would support such a sweeping change in the present state of our country, nor I hope at any time in future.

minorities and the Indian States and other interests, commercial and other, make new claims and make the already existing situation more bitter and more detrimental to the national interests of India. We want therefore that these endless discussions must terminate at the end of the war. That explains the first part. Since we are going to have a federal basis it is clear that the Indian states must come in.

In the second part we suggest that the members of these federal legislatures must, so far as the Indian states are concerned, be elected by their subjects. It may be that at the present moment of the two houses of the federal legislature the members of both houses may not be elected by the subjects of Indian states. It is at least necessary, however, that the lower house should be a wholly elected house in which nominations shall have no place whatsoever. The subjects of the Indian states are at the present moment suffering from a double dose of autocracy, that of the Indian princes and that of the paramount power. At least they should be free to a certain extent. It is not only in their interest that I am supporting this part of the resolution but in our own interest. We cannot have a divided nation and if federation is to be a real union there must be one chamber at least in which the people of India as people of India and not as members of this state or that state or this province or that province, shall have common representation and that is why I am supporting the second part of the resolution.

In the third part we are going a little further. We are saying that an immediate attempt should be made to nationalise the army. Mr Chandavarkar has in his speech on a former resolution made it quite clear how vital is the problem of the Indianisation of the army to India. Mr Kunzru has laid stress upon it in his own inimitable way. I therefore do not want to add any words to explain the necessity of this. I have only to add an explanation of the word 'immediately'. It is said by some that when a great war is going on the administration will be distracted by any such discussions if they are started forth with. I have only to point out the experience of the last war. The Montagu Declaration was made in 1917 when the war was in the middle of its course. Russia had practically dropped out of the war and the forces of the United States were still to be effective. England was fighting in a very difficult position on account of the unrestricted submarine warfare. When England was in danger England made this declaration and sent the Secretary of State to India in order to have interviews and to frame a sort of report so as to outline the future constitution of India. If this could be done in the last war I do not see any reason whatsoever why it could not be similarly done while this war is in progress. In fact the conditions are even more favourable. In the last war Indian armies were fighting outside and the distraction in India on political discussions meant distractions to our soldiers outside India. At the present moment Indians are not fighting outside. A time may come when such a position may arise. But it is wise to provide from our experience and I believe that there can be no practical difficulty whatsoever in immediately devising means to nationalize the army, especially the officer ranks of the army and to make it a national army. It is not in our own interest that I am pressing this, but it is in the interests of Britain. War at present is a very limited war, but things are changing so fast that the war may come to the borders of this country in the not distant future. It is no use waiting till then to start recruiting our army. We have been so long kept away from the possession of arms that our

preparations take a longer time than similar preparations in advanced countries. Here similar recruitment will take a much longer time to develop. That is why I suggest that an immediate beginning should be made. With these explanatory remarks I have got very great pleasure in supporting the proposition so ably moved and seconded.

*President* With regard to this Mr. Shroff has sent an amendment. In part (2) he wants that the army should be nationalized within a fixed early period, not later than seven years. I do not think that that amendment was moved in the subjects committee.

*Mr. Burjor J. Shroff (Bombay)* I would like to speak on this amendment of mine. I suggest the point which will have this effect.

*President* According to our rules no amendment can be moved in the open session unless it had been previously moved in the subjects committee of which all delegates are members. It was not moved and I am afraid therefore you cannot move it now. Leaving aside the objections to nationalizing the whole army in seven years—it is a very tall order—still I would have allowed you to move it if you had first of all moved it in the subjects committee. There is the 4th name of Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth put down but I am very sorry that he is not well and he is in bed.

*The resolution was put and carried unanimously.*

## FRAMING OF FUTURE CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA

### Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu

*Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu (Allahabad)* Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen the resolution which has just been passed laid stress on the point that Dominion Status should be the objective of the future Indian constitution. But there are ever so many points that will have to be carefully considered by a responsible body of men when such a constitution is going to be framed. The resolution which I have the honour to move deals with that particular matter and runs thus:

The Liberal Federation is strongly of opinion that the future constitution of India should be framed by Indians themselves but considers that the idea of the proposed constituent assembly is impracticable and is likely to retard our progress.

The Federation therefore suggests that a conference be convened in India by His Majesty's Government for framing the constitution and that it should be composed of:

- (1) the representatives of elected members of Provincial and Central Legislatures in British India elected on the basis of proportional representation,
- (2) the representatives of elected members of legislatures of Indian States,
- (3) the rulers of major States or their ministers invited by the Viceroy and the representatives of other princes elected by the Chamber of Princes,
- (4) representatives elected by landholders associations, associations representing trade and commerce and associations representing agricultural and industrial labour,
- and (5) a certain number of the members of the Conference to be nominated by the Viceroy to represent such interests and views as may otherwise go unrepresented.

Gentlemen, during the last 30 years the Government of India Act has been repealed three times. In 1909 Indian opinion was never consulted except perhaps to this extent that the National Congress sent its deputation to England and the views of certain representative Indians were placed before the British public. On the second occasion before the 1919 Act was passed Mr Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, came over here and tried to put himself in touch with the Indian view. But the Act was passed by the British Parliament without any effort being made to associate Indians in the framing of the constitution. In 1927 a Royal Commission, better known as the Simon Commission, was appointed. It did not contain any Indian member although in previous Royal Commissions a few Indians were always included as members of such Commissions. Indians were naturally very indignant and different important political parties strongly expressed their dissatisfaction and even boycotted that Commission. On the third occasion the system of the Round Table Conference was adopted. But there again the Indians selected as members of the Conference were nominated by the Viceroy. Three Conferences were held during three successive years. The personnel of the Conference was however, changed from time to time. After the second Conference some people who probably proved themselves somewhat inconvenient to the authorities, were eliminated and others were put in their place. But after these Conferences they again adopted the old method of having only the representatives of the British Parliament on a Committee called the Joint Parliamentary Committee. There again there were no Indians as regular members of that committee although Indian opinion was to a certain extent consulted. The decisions arrived at were entirely the decisions of the Joint Parliamentary Committee whose recommendations were incorporated in the new Government of India Act. On all these three occasions the Parliament alone held itself responsible for the measure of reforms that it considered safe and advisable to introduce in the Indian constitution. We find from experience that this method has not been sufficiently helpful to India. That is why in this resolution we lay stress on the point that the next constitution that will be placed before the British Parliament should really be hammered out by the Indians themselves and should fully reflect Indian opinion.

The question that now arises is how best that could be achieved. The Congress demands that a Constituent Assembly should be appointed for framing the future constitution and its decisions should be accepted by the British Parliament. The Congress further demands that the Constituent Assembly should consist of representatives elected on the basis of adult franchise and that important communities should be represented according to their numerical strength. It is clear that it is hardly a practicable scheme under the present circumstances. In order to have an election on the basis of adult franchise, it would be necessary to frame a new electoral roll. That alone would take quite a long time. We have a population of nearly 360 millions and the adult population may be said to consist roughly of 200 millions of people. Even if it is possible to have an electoral roll framed without much loss of time, it will be an almost impossible task to make the machinery of election work smoothly. Again think of the large number of representatives that will be elected on the basis of adult franchise. In a country consisting of a population of 360 millions if elections are to be organised on the widest franchise conceivable the number of elected representatives will have also to be sufficiently large



If for every lakh of population you are going to have one representative elected to the Assembly then no less than 3600 persons will have to be elected. Even if you have one representative for every million, the number of representatives in that Assembly will be somewhat in the neighbourhood of 400. It is true that for a country of such a huge population with diverse interests it will not do to entrust the important work of framing the future constitution of India only to half a dozen people. But in the name of commonsense can a large body of 3600 people be at all considered a workable body to take up such an important work. The Congress has already conceded that communities which at present enjoy separate representation will have the privilege of electing separate representatives to the Constituent Assembly also. Let us see what would be the number of representatives of the various important communities on that Assembly. Even if you work it out at one representative for every million people, it comes to an enormously large figure. It will roughly consist of about 260 Hindus, 90 Muslims and about six Christians and a few others. If the principle of representation according to the numerical strength of certain large communities be strictly adhered to, will it really satisfy different smaller communities that they are adequately represented? What is demanded is that the decisions of this Assembly should be binding on Parliament and that there should be a declaration to the effect that the British Parliament will enact the future constitution exactly as laid down by the Constituent Assembly. *Things being as they are, do we expect that the recommendations of that Assembly will be unanimous?* The Congress leaders have been saying that it is not necessary that there should be complete unanimity, but every effort is to be made to come to an agreement with the minorities. What if the agreement cannot be arrived at? How then can the decisions of the Constituent Assembly become operative, and how can the British Parliament give effect to the recommendations of only a majority in the Constituent Assembly? It is necessary to bear in mind the present condition of things in the country and to take a realistic view of the whole situation. The fact of the matter is that the time is not yet ripe for a Constituent Assembly of the character demanded by the Congress nor can its decisions be absolutely binding under the circumstances.

What is then a practical alternative to the scheme of a Constituent Assembly? We all feel that it is necessary that Indians of different shades of opinion should make an honest effort to come to some workable understanding, so that it may be possible to place before the British Parliament a more or less agreed constitution. We must therefore decide to meet together and exchange views in some kind of a conference which will not be exactly of the character of the Constituent Assembly as that term is ordinarily understood to signify. As Sir Maurice Gwyer has truly said, the long range artillery duel that is at present going on between the Congress and Muslim League leaders will not do. It will in fact make the situation worse. We have to put our heads together and do the best that we can in order to arrive at some agreed solution of the problem. There is clearly an advantage in convening a conference, but we do not want that our conference should be of the type of the Round Table Conference. What we suggest in our resolution is that the conference should not consist of people who may be merely nominated by the Government and changed from time to time, but, as far as possible, we should have men who would truly reflect Indian public opinion. Instead of resorting to a

system of adult franchise which, as I have said, is absolutely unworkable, there is a constituency already available in the shape of our Provincial Legislative Assemblies and Councils and the Central Assembly and the Council of State. These bodies consist of a large number of representatives of the people elected on the basis of a much wider franchise than what it was till 1935. Here is a ready made constituency which can at once be utilized for the purpose of convening a conference in India. You can easily ask the elected members of the provincial Councils to elect their representatives for this conference on the principle of proportional representation with single transferable vote. The advantage of the system of proportional representation with single transferable vote is that the minorities are assured of some representation at such elections. The one serious difficulty in elections conducted on the ordinary principle of majority vote is that the minority has no chance. Therefore the resolution suggests that the election should be on the basis of proportional representation. Proportional representation does not mean representation on the basis of numerical strength. It only means that the minority views and interests should have a chance of being fairly well represented.

We cannot in this connection lose sight of the Indian States whose interests have also to be considered in our future Indian constitution. The Congress also accepts this position but it only wants the representatives of the people of Indian states. When it recommends adult franchise, it is taken for granted that the privilege of adult franchise is also to be extended to the people of the Indian States. The fact of the matter is that in many states their subjects do not yet enjoy even the rudiments of representative government and yet the Congress demands that they should also be allowed to elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly on the basis of adult franchise straight away. The resolution before you suggests a more practicable scheme. It recommends the method of election only in such states where there are Legislative Assemblies already established. At the time when the Indian States Committee met in England, there were 30 states which had Legislative Councils. I believe by now there are more than 30, and at any rate, important states which have developed their methods of government more or less on modern lines, have now got Legislative Councils. Therefore we can easily have representatives of the people of those states which have been able to develop more or less a modern system of government. But that alone will not be sufficient as in the future constitution of India the interests of the governments of various states will have to be considered. In order that the larger problems of the states in matters of trade, finance and defence &c., may also be carefully considered it is necessary that full opportunities should be given in the discussion of such important questions to those who are at present carrying on the work of actual administration in these states. That is why it is suggested that it would be desirable to have also some princes or their ministers on such a body. There is the Chamber of Princes which is now a well established body. You have there quite a large number of Indian princes and they can send their representatives. But there are some major states whose rulers have not joined the Chamber of Princes. They can be invited by the Viceroy. Either the rulers if they chose to come, could sit or they may send their ministers. Besides the Indian States there are also other important interests which will have to be consulted when the future constitution of India is to be considered. You cannot conceive of being able to frame a complete or satisfactory constitution without carefully going into the question of trade, commerce and industry.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should have on that body representatives of such interests. We have various Chambers of Commerce in this country, and also other important bodies and trade associations. Then, again, you have in many provinces an influential body of landlords and they should also have some voice in this Assembly. It is true that some landlords are sure to come from the various legislatures, particularly the Legislative Councils, but it is desirable that some important landlords' associations may also be allowed to send a few representatives. We should not also lose sight of the fact that there is a very large body of agricultural and industrial labour in India, and the problems touching their moral and material welfare will have to be one of the chief concerns of the future Federal State of India. The resolution therefore urges the need of associating in this common work the representatives elected by some well recognized organizations of agricultural and industrial labour. With all this we still feel that there will be some interests and some views which will go unrepresented and that is why it is suggested in the last clause of this resolution that the Viceroy should nominate a certain proportion which may be fixed beforehand, of members who will represent other important interests and views which are not likely to get any chance of being represented through the process of election. Therefore gentlemen we feel that if a conference is convened in some such manner by the Viceroy, it will give an opportunity to people of different shades of opinion to meet in an atmosphere, not of suspicion but in an atmosphere where every one would be free to contribute his best to the deliberations of such an important conference. But if you start on the basis of adult franchise, where the representatives of different religious persuasions are to be separately elected and returned in proportion to their numerical strength you at once create suspicion and heart burning. Such an atmosphere will be most injurious to our true national interests. It must have by now become clear to you that the Constituent Assembly as demanded by the Congress will not only be unworkable but it may even retard our progress. A conference like the one suggested in this resolution will be a far more workable proposition and is more likely to be acceptable to the different shades of public opinion in this country. Such a body can easily resolve itself into various sub-committees which can at once come to business and see what they can do in the shape of hammering out an agreed constitution. Of course there are many details that will have to be gone into and considered carefully but this is merely a sort of framework of a conference which may tackle the question of our future constitution. Gentlemen I trust that you will express your approval of the scheme suggested in this resolution.

Mr M D Altekar

Mr M D Altekar (Bombay) Mr President ladies and gentlemen, I have to second the resolution which Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu has already treated in its details. I shall add one or two general observations. We have suggested in this resolution a more practicable way of how to frame a constitution for our country. Looking to the various sub-clauses of the resolution, you will find that we have given greater importance to practical considerations than merely to philosophical or theoretical considerations. We must have an Assembly which could be constituted somewhat more easily than the constituent assembly that is proposed by some of our friends. The general considerations in support of Indians taking part in constitution making should be quite clear. Parliament claims the right to frame a constitution for this country and the argument is

often brought forward that England has special responsibilities in this country and that she cannot leave the matter entirely to others. This resolution does not demand that the matter should be entirely left to Indians. The Viceroy will call certain people, but those people will be there according to a certain system of election instead of mere nomination. We do not want a packed Assembly where the theories of certain people will be carried out. We have seen even in the history of the last Round Table Conferences that certain people who were found to be inconvenient in the first Round Table Conference were quietly omitted for the further conferences and other people were substituted for them. There are certain theories prevalent in England with regard to the Government of India and the future constitution of this country. We do not see eye to eye with a good many of those theories and we want this country to be governed in a particular manner so that our country may be developed on proper lines. We are told for instance, by several Englishmen now and again and particularly at the present moment that democracy is not suited to the soil of this country. Let us tell them frankly and once for all that we are determined that democracy is going to be the system of government in this country. We intend to develop that and we want to overcome all the difficulties in the way. If the matter is entirely left to the Englishmen and to the Britishers we know the result.

Those of us who have studied constitution making during the last 50 years or so have found that with every new so called advance step in the direction of responsible government newer and newer difficulties have arisen and some times one feels them, one may not give expression to it in public gatherings that our position has worsened rather than bettered. This is the result of our British friends taking this matter exclusively into their hands and therefore it is high time that Indians must look into it and have a big share in framing the constitution for this country. We will get the help of our friends, but our voice should be heard and should be as far as possible carried out. England has failed in fact so far to give a proper constitution to India. Even the reforms that have come in so far contain the germs of certain wonderful things which take away all the good results that that constitution is normally expected to give us. My friend, Mr Chandavarkar, used the word cancer. There are certain cancerous growths that come up with each instalment of the constitution and we want to avoid that and therefore we must have an Assembly where Indian people will properly and largely be represented and which will not be a conference of merely nominated people.

Secondly, some one may ask, why do you want those British people in this manner, why should not we sit together and hammer out a constitution and ask the British people to give that to us? That is a very fine suggestion indeed. The only practical difficulty is that the British people are there and we have not devised a way of getting rid of them. It is quite well known that we cannot drive them out by force. If we could have, I suppose there would have been no conference either of the Congress or of the Liberal Federation. Because we must face facts, we must take into consideration that the British people are there and that they will have a voice in framing the constitution. All that we want today is to add our own voice to it and that voice should be the right voice of this country. Attempts are being made sincerely on different sides, though we may differ about them. If the Indian opinion is properly represented at any conference that may be held for this

purpose, we think that this way is largely better than certain other ways that are suggested I therefore very strongly recommend this resolution for your approval

*President* Before I ask Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru to support the resolution I have to announce that I have received notice of amendments One is by Mr Prem Mohan Verma, which is practically a verbal amendment Instead of the word "framing" he wants "recommending such modifications in the present constitution as may receive the largest measure of agreement" It is merely a verbal amendment

*Mr Prem Mohan Verma* It is absolutely necessary

*President* Did you move it in the subjects committee? If not, I am afraid you cannot move it now Further it does not change the substance

*Mr Prem Mohan Verma* It makes a world of difference

*President* The next is by Mr Shroff Instead of "conference" he wants "constituent assembly" It is against the first part. That part of your amendment (addressing Mr Shroff) is out of order The second part is that he wants to suggest the addition of the word 'communities' before "interests and views in part (5) I think "interests and views" does involve communities If you desire to move it I shall allow it as it was moved in the subjects committee

The President found that the amendment was not seconded by anybody and said It falls to the ground

### Fandit Raj Nath Kunzru

Supporting the resolution in Urdu, Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru (Agra) said that everyone was agreed that the future constitution for India should be framed by Indians themselves No doubt while framing such a constitution questions would have to be decided by a majority of votes For this it was necessary that the various interests should be represented as far as possible But the idea of framing the constitution by means of a Constituent Assembly was neither practicable nor prudent The decision of the majority of the constituent assembly need not be well thought out and reasonable The history of constituent assemblies in countries where they had been tried was not very bright and cheerful The last time when a constituent assembly had been convoked was in Russia in 1917 There too the assembly could not achieve any success Beyond deciding that there should be a democratic Federative Republic in Russia it could do no more It was not able to serve any useful purpose After meeting for one session it was not allowed to meet again by those in power They should take a lesson from the past The practical and best way for framing the constitution was that the representatives of various parties and interests should meet and draft the constitution as was pointed out in the resolution After the constitution was prepared sanction might be obtained of the electorate by taking their approval of the same A constituent assembly for framing the future constitution of the country was not a practicable proposition and would lead to chaos and confusion in the country and result even in a civil war between the communities

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### **Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru**

Supporting the resolution in Urdu, Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru (Agra) said that everyone was agreed that the future constitution for India should be framed by Indians themselves. No doubt while framing such a constitution questions would have to be decided by a majority of votes. For this it was necessary that the various interests should be represented as far as possible. But the idea of framing the constitution by means of a Constituent Assembly was neither practicable nor prudent. The decision of the majority of the constituent assembly need not be well thought out and reasonable. The history of constituent assemblies in countries where they had been tried was not very bright and cheerful. The last time when a constituent assembly had been convoked was in Russia in 1917. There too the assembly could not achieve any success. Beyond deciding that there should be a democratic Federative Republic in Russia it could do no more. It was not able to serve any useful purpose. After meeting for one session it was not allowed to meet again by those in power. They should take a lesson from the past. The practical and best way for framing the constitution was that the representatives of various parties and interests should meet and draft the constitution as was pointed out in the resolution. After the constitution was prepared sanction might be obtained of the electorate by taking their approval of the same. A constituent assembly for framing the future constitution of the country was not a practicable proposition and would lead to chaos and confusion in the country and result even in a civil war between the communities.

is that all officers in the army, from top to bottom, should be Indian. That is what I understand by Indianization. To make the matter more pointed, Indianization means the displacement of European by Indian officers. It does not merely mean the training or employment of Indians as officers, it does not merely mean an increase in the number of Indian officers. It implies necessarily the employment of Indian officers in place of British officers. This, however, has not been done by the British Government. The men who come out of the Indian Military Academy are made platoon commanders. The platoons are at present commanded by the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers who are Indians. The Indian Commissioned Officers, the Indians coming out of the Indian Military Academy who are known as Indian Commissioned Officers or I C O's briefly, are being appointed in place of these people. Consequently whatever the number of Indian officers in the army, at present they are not replacing British officers. The British officers remain where they are. Some of the officers who have come out of the Indian Military Academy at Dehradun have certainly taken the place of British officers but the system works in the manner I have described. It is true that these Indian officers will not for ever remain platoon commanders. They will rise higher. In the course of four or five years they may be promoted to take the place of British officers but even so, the pace of Indianization will have been delayed for four or five years. In the initial stages anyway, while the number of Indian officers will be increasing Indianization will not be increasing correspondingly. I call this a trick, a fraud. The British Government tried to make out that it was satisfying Indian aspirations. But in reality it was taking no steps to make the army truly national. For the British officers remain as they were. A proof of what I have said is this. In 1928 it was roughly calculated that the Indian officer cadre that the superior officer cadre of the Indian army required about 120 men annually to be kept at its proper strength. If as the British Government claimed 60 people are being trained at Sandhurst for the purpose that we had in view, the recruitment from England should be reduced to one half of what it was before, i.e., 60 Britishers and 60 Indian officers should be recruited annually. But as a matter of fact 120 British officers, roughly speaking, continue to be recruited still for the Indian army. You will thus see that no Indianization is going on at the present time and that if this method is continued, Indianization will be delayed considerably. What we have therefore to do is to make it plain to the British Government that the method that they are following now is regarded by us as a piece of trickery and that if they want to satisfy India of the genuineness of their desire to help it forward on the path of self rule, they must alter the present policy and employ Indian officers coming out of the Military Academy not in place of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers but in place of the British King's Commissioned Officers. Apart from this the pace of Indianization must be quickened. We are frequently told that the requisite number of Indian youths possessing the proper qualifications are not forthcoming. I am not satisfied of the genuineness of this complaint. I do not say that the number of candidates appearing for the examinations that are held in the Indian Military Academy is large. Nevertheless it is more than enough for the vacancies that are offered. I have no doubt that if the British Government carry on a little propaganda and make proper use of the University Training Corps and the Universities, there will be no dearth of candidates of high qualifications, of suitable education and character.

Singapore and Egypt although no such responsibility has been laid on the shoulders of any of the dominions vitally interested in the defence of these places, (b) to treat one tenth of the army in India virtually as an Imperial Reserve for utilization outside India in defence of British possessions between Egypt and Singapore, and (c) to make India liable for the payment of the maintenance charges of this Reserve even when it is employed in defence of these possessions.

2 In spite of the heavy burden of military expenditure borne by the country since the inception of the British rule, the Government have utterly failed in their duty to equip the country adequately for defensive purposes. The Federation reiterates its demand for (a) the rapid nationalization of the defence forces of India involving the replacement of British troops and the Royal Air Force by Indian Land and Air Forces and the substitution of Indian for European officers in the Army, Navy and Air Forces of the country, (b) the redistribution of the existing defence expenditure so as to provide more money for the rapid development of the Indian Air Force, the organization of defence against air raids which has been rendered essential by the changed international situation the Federation regretting that no steps have been taken in this direction and that the measures taken to train Indian pilots are extremely inadequate specially as compared with those taken in some of the dominions, (c) the removal of provincial and class restrictions regarding recruitment to the army, (d) a wide expansion, wherever possible on a compulsory basis, of the University Training Corps and the selection of cadets from the corps for admission to the Indian Military Academy, (e) the introduction of military drill and the establishment of cadet corps in schools in accordance with the recommendations of the Smea Committee, (f) a much wider extension of the Indian territorial force and (g) the taking of all necessary steps to make the people of this country more self-reliant in the matter of defence and to make India self-sufficient so far as possible in regard to the production of war materials.

I will preface my remarks by saying that to my mind this resolution is the foundation and substance of our aspirations. If the army is ours, the country is ours. But if the army is not controlled by us, we can neither achieve Dominion Status nor maintain it. As we are concentrating our attention on winning full self-government, it is absolutely necessary that we should realize the vital importance of defence in the scheme of self-government. When we consider the question of self-defence, many problems arise. I will deal with them one by one. I will first take the question of the Indianization of the army. By Indianization I mean the command of Indian troops by Indians. This is obviously one of the most important steps that we have to take in order to have an army that would be under our control. Unless the officers are ours, we cannot possibly call the army Indian. For a long time, as you know, Indians were not allowed to become King's commissioned officers. It was only in 1917 or 1918 that provision was made for their training as first class officers. During the last 21 years, however, while Indians have been admitted into the higher grade of officers in the army, the progress has been very slow and unsatisfactory. Owing to the discussions that took place at the Defence Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference, a committee met in 1931 at which it was announced that His Majesty's Government had decided that 60 persons would be trained annually at an Indian military academy to be established at Dehradun for employment as superior officers. But now what is the purpose of having Indian officers? It



is that all officers in the army, from top to bottom, should be Indian. That is what I understand by Indianization. To make the matter more pointed, Indianization means the displacement of European by Indian officers. It does not merely mean the training or employment of Indians as officers, it does not merely mean an increase in the number of Indian officers. It implies necessarily the employment of Indian officers in place of British officers. Thus, however, has not been done by the British Government. The men who come out of the Indian Military Academy are made platoon commanders. The platoons are at present commanded by the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers who are Indians. The Indian Commissioned Officers, the Indians coming out of the Indian Military Academy who are known as Indian Commissioned Officers or I C O's briefly, are being appointed in place of these people. Consequently whatever the number of Indian officers in the army, at present they are not replacing British officers. The British officers remain where they are. Some of the officers who have come out of the Indian Military Academy at Dehradun have certainly taken the place of British officers but the system works in the manner I have described. It is true that these Indian officers will not for ever remain platoon commanders. They will rise higher. In the course of four or five years they may be promoted to take the place of British officers but even so, the pace of Indianization will have been delayed for four or five years. In the initial stages anyway, while the number of Indian officers will be increasing, Indianization will not be increasing correspondingly. I call this a trick, a fraud. The British Government tried to make out that it was satisfying Indian aspirations. But in reality it was taking no steps to make the army truly national. For the British officers remain as they were. A proof of what I have said is this. In 1928 it was roughly calculated that the Indian officer cadre, that the superior officer cadre of the Indian army, required about 120 men annually to be kept at its proper strength. If as the British Government claimed, 60 people are being trained at Sandhurst for the purpose that we had in view, the recruitment from England should be reduced to one half of what it was before, i.e., 60 Britishers and 60 Indian officers should be recruited annually. But as a matter of fact 120 British officers roughly speaking, continue to be recruited still for the Indian army. You will thus see that no Indianization is going on at the present time and that if this method is continued, Indianization will be delayed considerably. What we have therefore to do is to make it plain to the British Government that the method that they are following now is regarded by us as a piece of trickery and that if they want to satisfy India of the genuineness of their desire to help it forward on the path of self rule, they must alter the present policy and employ Indian officers coming out of the Military Academy not in place of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers but in place of the British King's Commissioned Officers. Apart from this the pace of Indianization must be quickened. We are frequently told that the requisite number of Indian youths possessing the proper qualifications are not forthcoming. I am not satisfied of the genuineness of this complaint. I do not say that the number of candidates appearing for the examinations that are held in the Indian Military Academy is large. Nevertheless it is more than enough for the vacancies that are offered. I have no doubt that if the British Government carry on a little propaganda and make proper use of the University Training Corps and the Universities, there will be no dearth of candidates of high qualifications, of suitable education and character.

are men belonging to Madras or to certain communities from which recruits are not taken as a rule for the army. But so far as I have been able to ascertain, these soldiers are in no way inferior to the soldiers drawn from the Punjab or the United Provinces. The entire question is a question of training and feeding. Take a man from any race you like, feed him properly, give him the exercise that would make him physically efficient and train him as a soldier ought to be trained, and 10 to one he will prove equal to a soldier drawn from any class in the army. Apart from this it is necessary, if the defence of our country is to be placed on a broad basis, that we should have a citizen army and not an army the enlistment for which is limited to certain classes only. At present according to the Simon Commission, leaving out the workers, about 62 per cent of the Indian army is recruited in one province only, namely, the Punjab. Surely you cannot allow the defence of a big continent like India to depend upon only one province. It is to rest the defence system on its apex instead of its base. You thus see that both on general considerations and on considerations of expediency, it is necessary that the present method of recruiting soldiers should be altered, that they should be drawn from all communities and provinces and that our army should be so recruited as to create and develop the desire for military training in the population at large.

There is only one other point now that I shall deal with in this connection. That relates to the air force and the navy. What I have said with regard to the officer grades in the army applies also to corresponding grades in the air force and the navy. So far as the navy is concerned, it must be admitted that the supply of suitable candidates is very limited, that is because the navy is not well known even in universities and the Government have carried out no propaganda in order to make young men aware of the opportunity that the navy renders them of serving their country. If the Government were to play their part fully in this connection and were to show themselves in earnest in the matter of obtaining officers for all grades of our defence forces I have no doubt whatever that there will be no lack of suitable young men either for the army or the air force or the navy.

Another question that the resolution before you draws prominent attention to in this connection is the need for developing the air force. You all know the importance of the air force at the present time. In the international conditions that exist at the present time, it is not beyond the range of possibilities that India's security may be threatened. Aggression from the north-west seems more probable than from any other quarter. Considering the difficulties of an attack by land, it is reasonable to suppose that it is the air force rather than land forces that will be used to disturb our security and to threaten our country. It is absolutely necessary therefore at the present time that we should devote special attention to the development of an Indian air force. But what is the situation at the present time? An Indian air squadron is being formed and we have been told that it will be completed by 1940. There are eight more squadrons but they all belong to the Royal Air Force. Our air force is therefore all practically British. The air force was created only about 20 years ago. Indians are taking a keen interest in aviation as is shown by the development of civil air force in various centres. Why cannot steps be taken to train Indians, so that the requisite number of Indian air squadrons might

We have been told now that our frontiers are in Egypt and Singapore. But this is what has been said to us by His Excellency the Commander in Chief. So far as the report of the Chatfield Committee is concerned, it leaves the matter entirely vague. It does not fix even these limits to our frontiers. Another point is this. The Report says that if forces are used outside India for the purpose of defending India's external security, their expenses shall be paid by India. There is no mention of any particular limits there. For the time being His Majesty's Government have decided that Egypt and Singapore are within the sphere of our military limits. They may any day say that it is necessary for our defence that our troops should be employed beyond these limits at Cyprus or Malta or Hong Kong and that declaration will be quite enough to enable them not merely to take our troops outside our country but also to make India pay for their maintenance and all this has been done without our consent. Australia and New Zealand are vitally concerned in the defence of Singapore but has the British Government dared to lay a specific charge on them in connection with this maintenance or in connection with the supply of troops for its defence? Those dominions may of their own free will, supply the British Government with soldiers and money for the defence of Singapore but that is a wholly different thing. If that procedure had been followed in our country, well it would have been our decision. In the present circumstances while our rights have not been enlarged, our responsibilities have been. It is necessary, therefore, considering the very dangerous principle that underlies the recommendations of the Chatfield Committee, that we should enter a strong protest against the policy adopted by His Majesty's Government. We have been asking for self government. But the policy recently declared by his Majesty's Government would make us further subject to British control. It would for all practical purposes enable Britain to regard a part of our army as an imperial asset. The day of the Indian control over the army would be considerably delayed so long as the present policy continues. Ladies and gentlemen, in view of the issues involved in the question which I have ventured to discuss just now, I think it is necessary that we should concentrate our attention on it. Self defence, as I have often said, is the life blood of self government. Whether you obtain any declaration about your status from the British Government or not, the country will be yours provided you bring the army under your control. I attach far more importance to this than to any other question connected with the development of the Indian continent. I ask you, therefore, with all the emphasis that I can command, to concentrate your attention on this question, to enable the country to realize its vital connection with the problem of self government and to tell the British Government that if it wants our wholehearted support, whatever it may or may not do, it must take steps in order to make the Indian army truly national at an early date so that we may get the substance of self government.

**Mr J R Gharpurey**

*Mr J R Gharpurey (Bombay)* As Dr Kunzru said in the opening address in support of the resolution, I am absolutely in accord with him that this is the subject of all subjects. This is the most central subject on which we should concentrate all our energies and powers of advocacy in support of it. The late Mr Gokhale started a campaign with reference to this subject as early as 1893 and his classical deliverance at the Imperial Council with which we are all familiar shows that he realized even at that day the importance

of what he called imperial policy. Whether we call it defence or whether we call it the Chatfield Report, those who have the might in their hands can alone preserve their rights and acquire more as has been most strongly demonstrated nowadays by the Nazi and other activities. I shall only refer to one part of the resolution. Dr Kunzru has so elaborately dealt with it that it would be mere waste of time and as our President has warned me that I should not take more than five minutes, I shall not repeat what he has said. He has already said what I had in mind to some extent to submit to you. I shall deal only with one part and that is what is made much of in the Chatfield Report and the so-called donations. They say, we have given something like a magnificent gift to India but that gift is not acknowledged. You should bear in mind that gift is in kind and it consists of the unwanted superfluties, which are no longer wanted in the West and which have been dumped on India as absolute superfluties. That is not a gift at all. You are all aware that a real gift is something different. I don't call it a gift at all. The goods have to be kept somewhere and they have been dumped on India.

Next there is a loan sanctioned in favour of mechanization. Last year, sir, you had the honour to father this resolution. In that we had simply mentioned our sense of acute dissatisfaction at the exclusion of Indians from the Chatfield Committee. If even one Indian had been allowed to be on the committee we should have had some knowledge from within and we should have been able to get at the real genesis of this gift and the claim made for it.

Dr Kunzru has stressed on the extension of the borders of India. In these days one can imagine the extension of the borders of India to the borders of England because the air roads may reach England and India also. But our claim is that all that which is permitted to be done should be with our consent. Unless there is a national militia and the air force, navy and army are fully developed and nationalized, it would not do to ask Indians to join in this manner and we plead that this is the time for doing so. If not now, when? I do not think that I should take any further time of yours. I shall now leave the resolution in your hands.

A thorough change in the policy is necessary. We are paying too much of attention to Indianization of the army. Undoubtedly it is very important, but in the last 20 years the technique of modern warfare has considerably altered the situation. Today the Indian coast is entirely defenceless. You talk of the Royal Indian Navy. Do you know that the Royal Indian Navy has got no battleships, no cruisers, no destroyers, no aircraft carriers, no gunboats, no minelayers and no mine sweepers? It consists of five sloops of one Depot ship of a total tonnage which is less than the tonnage of *Admiral Scheer* which is now reported to be plying in the Indian Ocean. The Royal Air Force is divided into three categories. (1) The Home Squadron meant for Britain's defence, (2) the Fleet Air Arm intended for co-operation with the Navy, and (3) the Overseas Squadrons of which eight are posted in India. In the last war it was estimated that in order to intercept one bombing plane you required nine fighting aircraft. If in all India has 96 aircraft I fail to see how you will ever defend the shores of India if they are threatened by a German raider or if Italy should join Germany or if India is threatened from the Italian air base in Abyssinia or Somaliland. Today Italy has got 800 aircraft in Abyssinia. As against it you have got 96, more than half of which are concentrated in North West Frontier. This is the state of our Indian air force.

Take the Royal Indian Navy. As one critic put it, call it Royal, call it Indian, but for Heaven's sake don't call it a navy. (Laughter) I think that the one thing on which we should concentrate our attention is that the military expenditure running into 50 crores and more should be diverted to a very great extent to the development of the air force and the navy. I believe India ought to possess an air force consisting of nothing less than 1500 aircraft of the first line. You will say it is a tall order. It is not a tall order if you properly and wisely spend 50 crores which you throw every year in payments to higher officers. Not only do we need this aircraft strength but we need other incidental implements such as searchlights, anti aircraft guns, range finders, predictors, sound locators and what not. I am told that even in an important city like Bombay there is not a single sound locator, not a single anti aircraft gun and very little by way of defence against an air attack. If this is the state while a German raider is in the Indian ocean you will well imagine what will be the state if it actually threatens us. If a big power like Russia, Italy or Japan attacks us, then the state of India would be simply pitiable.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is very well for us to say that let a part of our expenditure be devoted to the creation of an air force. But aircraft requires personnel. You must have pilots, ground engineers and other personnel to maintain the searchlights and the anti aircraft guns. All that requires training. Even if you decide tomorrow to change over and have an air force for yourself it will take over two years and you will be in good time for the next war, certainly not for this one. This being the state of our air force and navy, our Federation has done well in emphasising that a part of the military expenditure must be diverted to reorganization of the aircraft so that we can have some safety.

Ladies and gentlemen, the President has warned that I should not take more than five minutes. I wish to crave your indulgence for a minute more. It is not merely providing aircraft, we require aircraft machineguns capable of firing at the rate of 12000 bullets per minute. That seems staggering. All these things cannot be had in a day. You require to send along with your aeroplanes

unremedied until now, through all these changes of government, it is imaginary. Believe me, it is not so, and this grievance has been recognized as genuine for all this time. Attempts have been made from time to time to remedy the evil but somehow it has always been found by the powers that be that it will not be in their interest to push through this reform to its end. Ladies and gentlemen, I need not tell you at this time of day that this vicious system of combining the judicial and executive functions must cause grave injustice in some cases and petty annoyances in very many others. Everybody knows it, Government knows it, people know it, every man who has been in the service of Government for even a few years knows it, and yet the evil remains as it is. Why have not provincial Governments tackled this question? Somehow it has been feared that if judicial functions were taken away from the executive, there would be a weakening of authority and consequently it will be detrimental to the efficiency of the machinery of government. I may assure you that it need not be so. The only result will be that revenue officers will have to be more careful in the exercise of their functions.

In the early nineties, the late Mr. Man Mohan Ghose, an eminent barrister of Calcutta who enjoyed much criminal practice, came across such grave cases of injustice due to this system that busy as he was he spent the last few years of his life in collecting evidence and trying to convince the bureaucracy of the urgency of the reform of this system. However, after him there was no equally strong champion of this cause and it was not expected that during the reactionary regime of Lord Curzon there would be any chance of this system being stopped. High hopes were, however, raised when the great Liberal Minister, Lord Morley, took over the office of the Secretary of State for India, and some of you may remember that one of the earliest reforms that he set his mind to was the separation of the judiciary from the executive. Lord Morley seems to have been struck with horror in regard to some decisions in Madras which probably led him to set the machinery into motion. Sir Arundel who was a Madras civilist, the province from which I come, and in which this system was already partially modified for the better, separation having been done in the lower ranks, was the Home Member of the Government of India at the time. Schemes were prepared and Provincial Governments were asked to report. I remember to have read the scheme for Madras. It was a very good scheme. Many of the provincial Governments, I understand, were in favour of the reform. As a matter of fact, we were expecting orders every day and some of us were already discussing among ourselves which branch we would go to, whether magisterial or revenue. But the orders never came. They were awaited then. They are awaited still. In the meanwhile, there was a great upheaval in Bengal due to the partition which probably led to the shelving of this reform for the time. After the popular element was introduced into the Executive Council by Lord Morley, it was expected that Indian members would take up this question if there was a real grievance. This, however, was not done. This matter lay in the province of the Home department and Indian members of the Executive Council would not have liked to interfere in a matter which appertained to a department in the charge of another member. Then came the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms with popular control of the legislature. It was rightly considered that it was up to the new legislature to take up this matter if they liked, and get the reform effected. However, during the diarchic system of government it was again held up. The matter concerned a reserved subject and ministers

responsible to the legislatures would not interfere in it. The financial stringency under which they worked came also in the way and things remained as they were.

It was expected that with the introduction of complete provincial autonomy in the provinces this question would be taken up by the Congress Governments and it was a great disappointment to us that it was not so taken up. The Congress Governments had too many irons in the fire and I suppose that in the 27 months of their existence they hardly had time to give serious thought to this reform. There has, however, recently been a very disquieting feature in regard to this matter. I understand that Mr C Rajagopalachariar, the able and talented Prime Minister of Madras, when asked why he was slow in getting this reform through, seems to have pronounced against this reform. He seems to have said that under popular governments there could be no fear of injustice being allowed to stand. 'If there be any injustice, we are there to remedy it,' he seems to have said. 'This reform might have been desirable and necessary when the old bureaucratic government was in power, but as we are now here to guard the interests of the people there is really no need for the reform and why then dispense with the administrative convenience possible under the present system.' I am surprised at this attitude of Mr C Rajagopalachariar. He must know that officials are officials whether they serve a bureaucratic government or a popular government. Under this evil system officials who may be inclined to do injustice will surely be tempted to do it. Out of 100 cases of injustice only four or five would go up to the top to be remedied by the higher authorities. The fear that authority would be weakened on depriving the Executive of their judicial functions is quite groundless. It may be supposed that the governments are so contented with the present system of administration that they would not care to have any departure from it or venture on a new experiment. As it is the late Sir Ali Imam, who was a member of the Congress in the old days and who later became the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, successfully introduced this reform in the Hyderabad State. Only last year I was in the State when I learnt that not only this reform has not weakened the authority of anybody, but it has been running smoothly and very successfully. I put a specific question to the Commissioner of a division if he found any difference made to the authority which he was exercising on account of this reform. He said, 'none whatever.' On the other hand, he found this reform very helpful. Ladies and gentlemen, do you think that we shall lag behind the State of Hyderabad in the matter of this reform? Let us try our best to compel the authorities to introduce this reform and stamp this evil, which is a relic of the old bureaucratic days, out of the administrative machinery of government. With our present enhanced status we owe it to our self respect that this evil system of combining the executive and judicial functions in one and the same person should cease as quickly as possible. Ladies and gentlemen, I commend this resolution to your acceptance.

#### Mr Surendra Nath Verma

*Mr Surendra Nath Verma (Allahabad)* Mr President and fellow delegates, a resolution on the subject of the separation of the judiciary and executive, if it has been entrusted to and moved by so eminent a retired member of the civil service as Mr Gharpure, hardly needs a lengthy speech from me in seconding it. I would only say that it has been a matter of keenest disappointment to everybody

that popular authorities have come into office but have not carried out this reform of the separation of executive and judicial functions in spite of popular agitation for over half a century. If it were still necessary to emphasize the importance of the separation of the executive and the judiciary, I would only cite to you two authorities. I would cite a passage from Henry Sidgwick. He says :

"In determining a nation's rank in political civilization, no test is more decisive than the degree in which justice, as defined by the law, is actually realized in its judicial administration, both as between one private citizen and another, and as between private citizens and members of the Government."

I would again cite from Professor Laski where he says :

"The doctrine of separation of powers enshrines a permanent truth. For it is obvious that if the executive could shape judicial decisions in accordance with its own desires, it would be the unlimited master of the state. The interpretation of the law must, therefore, be entrusted always to a body of persons whose will cannot be bound by the will of the executive. They must be able to call the executive to account" and so on. Further : "The concentration of the power to interpret the law in the same hands as the power to administer it has always historically been associated with tyranny. It was the characteristic hall mark of oriental despotism."

The fact is that the Congress party, having a thundering majority in the legislature wants to make the utmost use of the power they have got and it is really wedded to tyranny in this matter. It was said of an English member of the I. C. S. that he used to say, "I would rather grant complete dominion status to India immediately than give my sanction to the separation of the executive and the judiciary." Fellow-delegates, in this province we have been having a very unsatisfactory state of things. Our ex-Minister of Justice, Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, has propounded a scheme in which he has distributed the work of the judiciary between two sets of revenue officers—one of them take only revenue work and the other would be doing criminal work but at the same time the appellate power has been given only to the district magistrate. Well, the fact is that having known the power of control over executive by the old bureaucratic government, they want to retain the same. Really the position is this. While they would effect the separation of labour from capital, of the tenantry from landlords, they would never agree to the separation of the judicial from the executive. It is really a matter of the keenest disappointment that in other provinces too the Congress Ministry has adopted the same attitude. In Madras the Premier said that now that we are in power it is not at all necessary to separate the executive from the judiciary. The same has been said here by Dr. Katju. But I would say, as I have drawn your attention to the passage from Henry Sidgwick and Professor Laski that even where you have complete independence in a country like England it is never safe to concentrate the power of the executive and judiciary in the same hands.

I would submit that the sooner this reform is introduced the better for the country. Otherwise you know that in these provinces at least, I can speak from some knowledge that Congress officers and office-bearers have not enjoyed impartiality. Cases have not been rare in which the government has actually interfered with the judiciary. They have withdrawn cases of a grave nature. We are familiar with many cases that have been instituted of contempt of court because the office-bearers of district Congress committees would be



responsible to the legislatures would not interfere in it. The financial stringency under which they worked came also in the way and things remained as they were

It was expected that with the introduction of complete provincial autonomy in the provinces this question would be taken up by the Congress Governments and it was a great disappointment to us that it was not so taken up. The Congress Governments had too many irons in the fire and I suppose that in the 27 months of their existence they hardly had time to give serious thought to this reform. There has, however, recently been a very disquieting feature in regard to this matter. I understand that Mr C Rajagopalachariar, the able and talented Prime Minister of Madras, when asked why he was slow in getting this reform through, seems to have pronounced against this reform. He seems to have said that under popular governments there could be no fear of injustice being allowed to stand. 'If there be any injustice, we are there to remedy it,' he seems to have said. 'This reform might have been desirable and necessary when the old bureaucratic government was in power, but as we are now here to guard the interests of the people there is really no need for the reform and why then dispense with the administrative convenience possible under the present system.' I am surprised at this attitude of Mr C Rajagopalachariar. He must know that officials are officials whether they serve a bureaucratic government or a popular government. Under this evil system officials who may be inclined to do injustice will surely be tempted to do it. Out of 100 cases of injustice only four or five would go up to the top to be remedied by the higher authorities. The fear that authority would be weakened on depriving the Executive of their judicial functions is quite groundless. It may be supposed that the governments are so contented with the present system of administration that they would not care to have any departure from it or venture on a new experiment. As it is, the late Sir Ali Imam, who was a member of the Congress in the old days and who later became the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, successfully introduced this reform in the Hyderabad State. Only last year I was in the State when I learnt that not only this reform has not weakened the authority of anybody, but it has been running smoothly and very successfully. I put a specific question to the Commissioner of a division if he found any difference made to the authority which he was exercising on account of this reform. He said, "none whatever." On the other hand, he found this reform very helpful. Ladies and gentlemen, do you think that we shall lag behind the State of Hyderabad in the matter of this reform? Let us try our best to compel the authorities to introduce this reform and stamp this evil, which is a relic of the old bureaucratic days, out of the administrative machinery of government. With our present enhanced status, we owe it to our self respect that this evil system of combining the executive and judicial functions in one and the same person should cease as quickly as possible. Ladies and gentlemen, I commend this resolution to your acceptance.

**Mr Surendra Nath Verma**

*Mr Surendra Nath Verma (Allahabad)* Mr President and fellow delegates, a resolution on the subject of the separation of the judiciary and executive, if it has been entrusted to and moved by so eminent a retired member of the civil service as Mr Gharpure, hardly needs a lengthy speech from me in seconding it. I would only say that it has been a matter of keenest disappointment to everybody

that popular authorities have come into office but have not carried out this reform of the separation of executive and judicial functions in spite of popular agitation for over half a century. If it were still necessary to emphasize the importance of the separation of the executive and the judiciary, I would only cite to you two authorities. I would cite a passage from Henry Sidgwick. He says :

"In determining a nation's rank in political civilization, no test is more decisive than the degree in which justice, as defined by the law, is actually realized in its judicial administration, both as between one private citizen and another, and as between private citizens and members of the Government."

I would again cite from Professor Laski where he says.

"The doctrine of separation of powers enshrines a permanent truth. For it is obvious that if the executive could shape judicial decisions in accordance with its own desires, it would be the unlimited master of the state. The interpretation of the law must, therefore, be entrusted always to a body of persons whose will cannot be bound by the will of the executive. They must be able to call the executive to account" and so on. Further : "The concentration of the power to interpret the law in the same hands as the power to administer it has always historically been associated with tyranny. It was the characteristic hall mark of oriental despotism."

The fact is that the Congress party, having a thundering majority in the legislature wants to make the utmost use of the power they have got and it is really wedded to tyranny in this matter. It was said of an English member of the I. C. S. that he used to say, "I would rather grant complete dominion status to India immediately than give my sanction to the separation of the executive and the judiciary." Fellow-delegates, in this province we have been having a very unsatisfactory state of things. Our ex Minister of Justice, Dr. Kishu Nath Katju, has propounded a scheme in which he has distributed the work of the judiciary between two sets of revenue officers—one of them take only revenue work and the other would be doing criminal work but at the same time the appellate power has been given only to the district magistrate. Well, the fact is that having known the power of control over executive by the old bureaucratic government, they want to retain the same. Really the position is this. While they would effect the separation of labour from capital, of the tenantry from landlords, they would never agree to the separation of the judicial from the executive. It is really a matter of the keenest disappointment that in other provinces too the Congress Ministry has adopted the same attitude. In Madras the Premier said that now that we are in power it is not at all necessary to separate the executive from the judiciary. The same has been said here by Dr. Katju. But I would say, as I have drawn your attention to the passage from Henry Sidgwick and Professor Laski that even where you have complete independence in a country like England it is never safe to concentrate the power of the executive and judiciary in the same hands.

I would submit that the sooner this reform is introduced the better for the country. Otherwise you know that in these provinces at least, I can speak from some knowledge that Congress officials and office-bearers have not enjoyed impartiality. Cases have not been rare in which the government has actually interfered with the judiciary. They have withdrawn cases of a grave nature. We are familiar with many cases that have been instituted of contempt of court because the office-bearers of district Congress committees would be

interfering with the course of justice. In these circumstances, it would be hardly safe to entrust the Congress Ministry with the general control of the executive and the judiciary in the same hands. For these reasons I strongly support this resolution and hope that it would be carried by you.

Mr M D Altekarr

Mr M D. Altekarr (Bombay) Mr President and friends, two lawyers have spoken to this resolution—I beg your pardon, one is an ex-civilian and the other is a lawyer. I am a plain man. I know this thing that since the beginning of the Indian National Congress certain things were laid down as matters of principle and this question of separation of the executive from the judiciary has been considered to be a matter of principle, an important principle. Throughout the last 50 years we have criticized governments for their breach of this principle from time to time and still when new governments came into power two and half years ago, no change has taken place in this attitude. As far as I know from leading papers in your province, I find that your Minister of Justice at least made a show of effecting this separation and it did remain almost a show up to the end. In my province our Home Minister never made any pretence in this matter. There were occasions when open interference with judicial affairs was done by the Home Minister of Bombay. During the two or three minutes I am speaking to you I cannot give you all the details, but I will just give one story which has not been given out in the papers in this province. Certain people in the share bazar, the stock exchange of Bombay, were not paying stamp duty for a long time. It was found out and then the collector of Bombay decided to prosecute those people and the prosecutions were launched. It is understood—I speak in newspaper language—that the collector and district magistrate was asked by higher authorities to withdraw those prosecutions but he did not do it. Later the Home Minister and the other members of the Ministry thought that the collector was suffering from strain of overwork and they made him appear before a medical board consisting of three eminent doctors in Bombay. The board stated that after carefully examining this I.C.S. officer of 15 years standing they found that there was nothing wrong with him. Ordinarily one would suppose, the opinion of a board consisting of three eminent doctors, one of them being the dean of the Grant Medical College of Bombay, should convince all normal people that it was right. But the Ministry thought that it was not right and they asked the collector again to go before the medical board. Once more the medical board was requested to have suggested that there was nothing wrong with the man and still this collector of Bombay has been made to go on leave for one year. Certain questions were asked in the Legislative Assembly but evidently the matter was not properly handled by the members themselves. Nobody there appeared to find out from Government with regard to the specific complaint that people in the Stock Exchange market were involved, that they were prosecuted as offenders were issued that their prosecution should be withdrawn. Now it is well known that in a matter like this the collector should have either prosecuted these people or should have compromised by exacting certain fines. But once the collector took a certain step, it was no business of the executive government to interfere with him and still here is this government which openly did this.

Not only that, there was an attempt in the Bombay Legislative Assembly to defend the steps taken. In these circumstances you will easily find that it was wrong to expect from these people to carry on this reform. Just about this time I was talking with one of the Bombay Ministers. He is an old man, undoubtedly he was one of the most capable men in the Bombay presidency. He said to me why do you talk so much of principles, so much of freedom? It was all right, he added as long as the British Government was there but now that we are here these things need not be considered at all. There is no question of principles no question of democracy when we, superior beings as we are are administering this province. I reminded him that that could not be. Even in public life principles do count for a good deal and public life based on no principles was a very bad public life indeed. But still there were several instances like this. You must have read about them in newspapers. All that I want to say is this that what we had expected from Congress Governments was that apart from our differences with them there were certain subjects in which their views and our views were completely identical. This was one of those subjects. We are thoroughly dissatisfied in this matter. You must have read that one of the eminent Ministers of the Congress stated openly, 'I am not going to do this. This will not do and therefore we must lodge our protest against this. Those Ministries have gone out and I hope that they will come back some time. By this resolution we want to inform them that this lack of principle will not pay them and they will be ultimately found out. It is not a question of keeping up the prestige of a certain party. These principles ought to be preserved.

#### Mr Anand Prasad Agarwal

*Mr Anand Prasad Agarwal (U P)* Mr President brother-delegates ladies and gentlemen when I first read this resolution I felt that though it contains the principle which we have been stressing for the last 50 years or so and which has been one of the main demands of the Congress before it accepted office, we must mention the reasons therein why the Congress Ministries thought it expedient to break up the principle embodied in the Congress resolution. I prepared an amendment. I showed it to our venerable President. He thought it proper not to allow it as he thought that it was not moved in the subjects committee. But I would like to read that amendment as part of my speech before you and not as an amendment. It is missing. The reason to my mind is that after all when they had assumed office they took advantage of the dependence of the executive officers on them and they found that they were very easy and flexible agents to put into operation their revolutionary and disruptive policies into action. What did they do in the provinces? The moment they assumed office they issued a stay order staying all rent suits pending till that day. Gentlemen there was not a single provision in a statute consisting of about 300 sections in the Agra Tenancy Act under which the Government could issue such an order or the deputy collectors could have stayed these suits. They know that the constitutional question would be raised in civil courts. The deputy collectors could not dare to upset the orders of the Congress Ministry. Thus a vast number of thousands of cases pending in revenue courts were bundled together and were sent either to the record rooms or were made to decorate the officers' chambers in court rooms. When the Minister of Justice found that the order was illegal he produced a Bill before the Assembly for staying all proceedings in the revenue courts. It was

- (c) The Federation trusts that the rulers of states will realize in their own interest that, with the working of responsible government in the provinces, it is no longer possible for them to continue to administer their states on the existing lines. The Federation, therefore, urges the rulers to concede to their subjects without any further delay the right of security of person and property, liberty of speech and of the press, freedom of association, an independent judiciary, and to initiate adequate measures for the establishment of responsible government.

I have very little to add to the remarks that I made last year. The first two parts of the resolution are quite self-evident to you and on those points I am not going to make any speech whatsoever. We are here as Liberals, we are here as champions of the down-trodden and an India at the present moment except in the political field the subjects of the Indian states are down-trodden. It is therefore quite natural that we should sympathize with their aspirations. We know that they have got capacities. It is very difficult to suppose that they have not got capacities because we know that in the neighbouring districts with similar circumstances economical, educational and with similar pursuits and ideas people do have capacities. It is very difficult to have one system of administration for one part of India and altogether a different system of administration in the other parts of India. The two must go together if the country as a whole is to rise higher. Our sympathies therefore should go naturally to the subjects of Indian states and we naturally welcome the declarations made by certain princes to share their administration with their subjects. We want that they should have similar rights and so we want to say that these declarations in themselves are not quite sufficient. In many respects those declarations are very vague and in some cases those declarations set no time limits whatsoever, whether the princes would give them rights within two, three or 20 years time. We want that they should do it early lest it may be said that they have awakened too late to the gravity of the situation. Then I say that the two sides must join the Federation and all the sides must realize that so far as the fundamental rights of their subjects are concerned, there should be no difference whatsoever.

In the central sphere there are certain reserved subjects. We regard it as a slur upon us. But in the Federation still we find that some 450 states do not find any place whatsoever in it. What are these states going to do? Are they to remain as they are? If they remain as they are there is one great danger, I may assure you. They will serve merely as cantonments for the foreign garrison that will be imposed upon us. I do not like—I hope you will sympathize with me—that there should be certain Indians in this country, whether those Indians are in British India or in the states, who are outside the purview of the Indian government and under the suzerainty of the foreign government. We therefore want that all these states should come in. I lay a certain amount of emphasis on it even if it is not in the resolution, particularly so because since we have heard Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru on the defence problem you can see how severely we resent, how strongly we resent a British garrison in this country. We regard it as a blot on the fullness of provincial autonomy.

Now there is one question to which I would like to refer. How are these states to be brought in? Surely you don't want them to be absorbed by the British provinces. They won't like it as they have got sentiments of their own.

You can't say that they should be absorbed by other states round about them. The only possible remedy is to bring them together into small groups of their own or let them join other groups that should also exist. If they join a group and form a sort of common administration, even if there is no legislature and nothing like any responsibility or even responsiveness to the wishes of the subjects, there will be a certain amount of improvement in their administration. At present the administration in each single state depends upon the whim of one man. If several neighbouring states join together, you will see that 10 persons cannot satisfy their whims at one and the same time. They will have to create one common platform and the result would be that the whim of one man would be removed and there would be something like a common law, even if we cannot give that very dignified name to it. With these remarks I move the proposition and I hope that you will carry it unanimously.

Mr S G Vaze

Mr. S. G. Vaze—I beg to second this resolution. Prof. Kelkar has dealt with it so exhaustively that I shall not be justified in troubling you with any remarks of my own. I second it.

*The resolution was then put and carried unanimously*

### INDIANS OVERSEAS

*Ceylon*—1 The National Liberal Federation strongly protests against the Ceylon Government's policy of discrimination against Indians and their decision

- (a) to dismiss and repatriate Indians employed in Government departments since April 1, 1934
- (b) to retrench Indian employees of more than five but less than ten years of service on a racial basis, if they do not voluntarily retire by the end of 1935

2 The Federation fully supports the decision of the Government of India to prohibit the emigration of Indian labour to Ceylon and urges it to take necessary measures to secure justice to the Indian community.

*South Africa*—This Federation expresses its indignation and resentment at the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa and the policy of segregation embodied in the Asiatic Land and Trading Act although there was no proof that Indians were violating any of the existing statutes, or were resorting to illegal practices and although the Union Government have undertaken under the Cape Town Agreement to treat the Indian community as an integral part of the population of the Union of South Africa and to take steps to raise their position.

*Fiji*—This Federation draws the attention of the Government of India to the grievances of the Indians of Fiji as stated in the resolution passed at the All Fiji Indian Conference in November, 1938 and urges it to press His Majesty's Government to agree to the appointment of an Agent to the Government of India in Fiji which in the opinion of this Federation, is necessary to develop better understanding between the Government of India and the Government of Fiji and to enhance the status of the Indian community. The war should not be allowed to stand in the way of the satisfaction of this demand which ought to have been agreed to, long ago, by His Majesty's Government.

*Malaya* —The Liberal Federation appreciates the action taken by the Government of India in stopping assisted emigration to Malaya as a protest against the reduction of the wages of Indian labourers employed on plantations by the planters and urges it to prohibit all emigration of labour, whether assisted or unassisted, as has been done in the case of Ceylon, in order to protect the rights of Indian labour

The Federation further impresses on the Government of India the need for taking steps to secure the rights of the Indian community in Malaya both in order to vindicate Indian self respect and to raise the status of India

*The resolution was put from the chair and carried unanimously*

### INDIANS CONSULAR SERVICE

- (a) In the interests of safeguarding the rights of Indians living in other parts of the British Empire as well as in foreign countries, the National Liberal Federation of India is of opinion that an Indian Consular Service should be developed on the lines adopted by the Dominions
- (b) Pending the development of such a Consular Service, the Federation urges the admission of Indians into the British Diplomatic and Consular Corps from which Indians have been so far scrupulously excluded

*The resolution was put from the chair and carried unanimously*

### WAR AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The National Liberal Federation urges the Government of India to take steps to encourage and develop all such industries as can be expanded or established on a sound basis during the war or are necessary in the large interests of the country

*The resolution was put from the chair and carried unanimously*

### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Rai Sahib Dalip Man Singh

*Rai Sahib Dalip Man Singh* The resolution that I am going to move is the last on this agenda. But the subject is very important and needs very careful consideration, but as the time at my disposal is very short I will not inflict any long speech on you. The resolution is as follows —

The National Liberal Federation advocates measures to secure

- (a) the relief of agricultural indebtedness and the adoption of measures to check further fragmentation and facilitate the consolidation of agricultural holdings,
- (b) the embodiment in legislative enactments of the main principles of land revenue assessment in provinces where this has not been done,
- (c) substantial aid in the development of industries, big and small alike,
- (d) a fiscal and monetary policy wholly in the interests of the country,

- (e) legislation for the more adequate protection of the labouring classes both in urban and rural areas,
- (f) the early introduction of free and compulsory elementary education for both boys and girls,
- (g) adequate provision for medical relief and the promotion of public health, particularly in rural areas.

This is an exhaustive resolution and it deals with a number of important topics about which it is very necessary to have definite legislation from Government. But the subjects with which it deals are such about which we can do a lot of useful work without any help from Government. If we stand on our own legs we can try to remove agricultural indebtedness by means of co-operative societies, and consolidation of holdings also can be very easily done through them, as has already been begun in our province. Similarly about the development of industries we can do a lot and we have noticed that the fiscal and monetary policy of this country has been solely made for the benefit of foreigners and poor peasants have always been injured by it. So it is very necessary that everything should be done in our own interest. Similarly legislation has been made for rural and urban labourers and compulsory education has also been introduced and provision for the promotion of public health has also been made. But certainly it is very necessary to pay more attention to these important points. As I said at the beginning, if we try to interest ourselves we can do a lot without any outside help. With these words I beg to move this resolution.

#### Mr. Prem Mohan Lal Verma

*Mr. Prem Mohan Lal Verma (Allahabad).*—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the recommendations made in this resolution deal with the economic development of the country. It has become a platitude to say that industrial development is the panacea for most of the ills of this country. But looking to the fact that a good many of these measures have been recommended year after year and some of them, if not most of them, come within the scope of legislation of the provinces in which we had popular ministries during the last three years, it is time for us to take some stock of the work or the achievement of these ministries towards the promotion of some of these measures. Now, for instance, the first one is about the agricultural indebtedness of India. We know that in this province in the former legislature some Debt Acts were passed which are fully in operation. But what happened? As the result of these Acts rural credit has absolutely gone. What did the Congress Government do to rehabilitate rural credit? Nothing that we know of. The second thing that I should like to talk to you about is the fragmentation of holdings. About that we know the Congress Government in these provinces has passed a Tenancy Act, but nothing substantial or real has been done and no scheme has been put forward in that Act to bring about measures for the consolidation of uneconomic holdings. That is another thing in which the Congress Ministry in this province has attempted and failed. The third thing that I should like to tell you about is their rural development work. One instance offers to my mind and that is the description a chairman of a District Rural Development Association gave me with some pride. He said that he had spent the magnificent sum of Rs. 5,000 during the year over the construction of one or



two wells for the Harijans and similar things. For one of the biggest districts in this province to spend an amount of money like Rs 5,000 for the benefit of such a large population of agriculturists, I submit, was insignificant work, and then, most of this money, we know, is certainly going into the pockets of workers themselves rather than benefiting the agricultural population. This is another work of the Congress Ministry in this province.

Now, gentlemen, I would like to tell you one thing more. Although everybody wants to benefit the agriculturist because his is the voting class and the main electorate. But how have they given any redress to the agriculturist when they have not reduced rents at all? Reduction of rent, you should know, means a corresponding reduction in revenue and for that the Government says there is no money. If there is no money why should more money be spent on such schemes as prohibition? Large sums of money raised from other taxation are spent on other things in order to show that they are doing something, although they are really doing nothing.

Now, gentlemen, there is another thing in this province which should have been done with great success and that was the development of the hydro-electric scheme, but the Congress has done nothing in this matter. What the poor agriculturist wants is that you may supply him cheap canal water for irrigation, or cheaper power, and implements of agriculture, or good and cheap supply of seed and any such thing which will really provide him with working capital, and give him some credit. For that the Congress Government has practically done nothing. Coming to the industrial development side, I submit that there is not one factory of any kind which has been opened or started by the Congress Ministries during the three years of their working. The middle classes have not been benefited by any scheme. In fact they have lost all along the line and there is nothing that has been done to bring about the industrial development of the country. Considering these things, I submit that the popular Ministries stand discredited, and I will for want of time end by saying that the popular Ministries have given us not even second rate Ministers, but third rate Ministers, so far as these questions are concerned.

*President* Mr Kulkarni wants to add "(g) serious difficulties that have arisen by reason of the enormous growth of population in this country without a corresponding growth in the country's resources." The amendment is disallowed. (*The resolution was then put and carried unanimously*) That concludes the part of our work relating to resolutions. Now I shall ask the secretary to read the names of the members of the Council. Before that I propose that Mr B N Gokhale and Mr M D Altekar be reappointed secretaries and Mr B G Gokhale be appointed another secretary for the year 1939-40.

### MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

The list of members of the Council of the National Liberal Federation was then read out by Mr M D Altekar.

#### *President*

Dr R P Paranjpye, M A, D Sc., "Purushottamshram," Poona No 4

#### *Vice-Presidents*

2 Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, K. C. S.I., C I E., LL. D., Myslapore,  
Madras.

- 3 Sir C Y Chintamani, Kt, D Litt., LL D, 26, Hamilton Road,  
Allahabad
- 4 The Rt Hon V S Srinivasa Sastri, P C, C H, LL D,  
Mylapore, Madras
- 5 Sir Chumanlal H Setalvad, K C I E, LL D, 113, Esplanade Road,  
Bombay
- 6 Sir Moropant Joshi, K C I E, Advocate, Nagpur *Chumbergo*
- 7 Mr J N Basu, M L A, M A, B L, 6, <sup>Chumbergo</sup> Old Post Office Street,  
Calcutta
- 8 The Hon Dr Hriday Nath Kunzru, M C S, Servants of India  
Society, Allahabad
- 9 Mr T R Venkatrama Sastri, C I E, Mylapore, Madras
- 10 Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart, K C I E, O B L, M L A, Church  
Gate Street, Bombay No 1
- 11 The Hon ble Mr P N Saprú, Bar-at Law, M C S, 19, Albert  
Road, Allahabad

#### General Secretaries

- 12 Mr B N Gokhale, M A, LL B, (Advocate) Girgaum Road,  
Bombay 4
- 13 Mr M D Altekar, M A, Park Road, Vile Parle, Bombay 24
- 14 Mr S G Gokhale, M A, Servants of India Society, Poona No 4

#### Nominated by the President

- 15 Rao Bahadur R G Mundle Yeotmal, Berar
- 16 Rai Bahadur M Narsingh Prasad, Advocate, Gorakhpur
- 17 Mr B S Kumat, B A Ganeshkhund Road Poona No 5
- 18 Mr S G Vaze, B A, Servants of India Society, Poona No 4
- 19 Mr P Kodandri Rao, M A, Servants of India Society, Craddock  
Town, Nagpur

#### Elected Members

##### (BOMBAY)

- 20 Sir Homi Mehta Kt, Manekji Wadia Building, Esplanade Road,  
Bombay
- 21 Mr V N Chandavarkar, Bar-at-law, Pedder Road, Malabar  
Hill Bombay
- 22 Mr A D Shroff, B A, B Sc, (Lond) Bombay House, Bruce  
Street, Bombay
- 23 Mr J R B Jeejeebhoy, Alice Building, Hornby Road, Bombay  
No 1
- 24 Mr Vasantirao, S Ravut, J P, French Bridge, Clauapaty,  
Bombay 7
- 25 Mr B D Lam, Solicitor, 113, Esplanade Road, Bombay No 1
- 26 Mr N M Joshi, M L A, Servants of India Society,, Bombay  
No 4

- 27 Mr. N R Wadia, Motlabai Building 120, Parai Bazar Street,  
Bombay No 1
- 28 Mr N C Bharucha, M A, LL B, (Advocate), 468, Kalbadevi,  
Bombay 2
- 29 Mr K J Dubash, B A, LL B, Solicitor, 79, Meadows Street,  
Bombay 1
- 30 Dewan Bahadur Chumal M Gandhi, Advocate, Nanpura, Surat
- 31 Mr M S Sirdar, Bar at law, Sholapur
- 32 Mr D G Dilvi, M A, LL B, (Advocate), Alexandra Road,  
Bombay 7
- 33 Principal J R Gharpure, Advocate Angros Wadia, Bombay No 4
- 34 Mr H G Gharpurey, I C S, (Rtd), 344, Shaniwar Peth, Poona 2
- 35 Mr G K Gadgil, Bar at Law, Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2
- 36 Dr G S Mahajan, M L C, Ferguson College, Poona 4
- 37 Mr V M Apte, B A, LL B, (Advocate), Dhule, West Khandesh
- 38 Prof D D Kapadia, M A, 6, Sturanton Road Poona No 1
- 39 Rao Sahib P S Vaidya Deccan Gymkhana, Poona 4

## (BENGAL)

- 40 The Hon Sir Bejoyprasad Singh Roy, Kt, M L A, 10,  
Lansdowne Road, Calcutta
- 41 Mr H M Bose, Bar at law, 1, Mullen Street, Calcutta
- 42 Mr Nibaran Chandra Ray, M A, 213, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta
- 43 Prof B B Roy, M A, Statesman House, Calcutta
- 44 Mr Satinath Roy, M A, B L, 12, Holwell Lane, Calcutta
- 45 Mr P N Singh Roy, 15 Lansdowne Road, Calcutta
- 46 Mr Sudhanshu Kumar Mitter, 34/1, Lligun Road, Calcutta
- 47 Kumar Rajendro Narain Roy, 79, Upper Chitpore Road, Calcutta
- 48 Rai Jagendranath Mookerji Bahadur, O B L, Ranghat, Nalhati
- 49 Rai Keshab Chandra Bannerjee Bahadur, Sutarpur, Dacca
- 50 Rai L mandral De Bahadur, 186 Grand Trunk Road, Uttarpara  
(L I Ry)
- 51 Mr Munmathi Nath Sen, Solicitor 44, Rankinto Bose St, Calcutta
- 52 Mr B K Chaudhuri, 99/1/C, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta
- 53 Lord Sinha of Raipur, 7, Lord Sinha Road, Calcutta
- 54 Raja Bhupen Bra Narain Sinha Bahadur of Nashipur, 54, Gariahat  
Road, Calcutta
- 55 Mr Sachundra Prasad Bisu, 6, College Square, Calcutta
- 56 Mr Shiva Prasanna Ghose, 75 Beadon Street, Calcutta
- 57 Mr Bhagwandas Kalia, 29, Clive Street, Calcutta
- 58 Mr Shew Kissen Blattar, 30, Clive Street, Calcutta
- 59 Mr Gosto Behari Mandal, Nawabganje, Barrackpur, Bengal
- 60 Mr Nirmal Chandra Ghose, Sheoraphuli, E I Railway
- 61 Pandit Hariachandra Gossain, 3, Gossainpara Lane, Calcutta

- 62 Kumar Saradindu Narayan Roy, 11, Braunfeld Row, Calcutta  
 63 Mr D C Ghose, Bar-at-Law, 23, Devendra Ghose Road, Calcutta  
 64 Kiran Chandra Datta, 1, Lakshmi Dutta Lane, Calcutta

## (UNITED PROVINCES)

- 65 Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, Hamilton Road, Allahabad  
 66 Rai Bahadur Thakur Hanuman Singh, P O Dumraon, (Dist. Shahabad)  
 67 Dr Rajeshwar Bali, O B E, Daryabad, District Bara Banka  
 68 Rai Bahadur Lala Bihari Lal, Rani Mandi, Allahabad  
 69 Rao Krishnapal Singh, Castle Grant, Agra  
 70 Rai Brij Narain Gurtu, George Town, Allahabad  
 71 Babu Bodhraj Sabney, Advocate, Civil Lines, Jhansi  
 72 Pandit Krishna Prasad Kaul, Ganga Pd Memorial Building, Lucknow  
 73 Pandit Gopi Nath Kunzru, Advocate, Clive Road, Allahabad  
 74 Babu Vishwanath Prasad, Leader Buildings, Allahabad  
 75 Mehta Krishna Ram, Leader Buildings, Allahabad  
 76 Mr Dalip Mansingh, M A, LL B Advocate, Fatehpur,  
 77 Babu Surendra Nath Varma, Advocate, Elgin Road, Allahabad  
 78 Babu Vishun Nath, 3, Cawnpore Road, Allahabad  
 79 Rao Raja Dr Shyam Bihari Misra, 105, Golganj, Lucknow  
 80 Mehta Mahipat Ram, Leader Office, Allahabad  
 81 Pandit Parmeshwar Nath Sapru, "Surya Bhawan," Fyzabad  
 82 Rai Bahadur Babu Ram Narayan, Civil Lines, Cawnpore  
 83 Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, M A, C I E, M L A, Lucknow  
 84 Rai Bahadur Bibu Bhagwati Saran Singh, "Chandra Bhawan," Outram Road, Allahabad  
 85 Rai Bahadur Babu Kampta Prasad Kalkar, Rani Mandi, Allahabad  
 86 Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Taluqdar, Kotra, Sitapur Dist  
 87 Rai Bahadur Kunwar Guru Narayan, Maurawan (Unao) Oudh  
 88 Rai Bahadur Pt Badri Dutt Joshi, Vakil, Nainital  
 89 Mr Ayodhya Das, Bar at law, Anand Bhawan, Gorakhpur  
 90 Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru, Chhli Int Agra  
 91 Pt Munohar Lal Zutshi, 10, Beli Road, Allahabad

## (MADRAS)

- 92 Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiyar, Chettinad Palace, Adyar, Madras  
 93 Rao Bahadur Dr C B Rama Rao Kanti Nivas, Basavangudi, Bangalore City  
 94 Raja Sir Vasudev Raja of kollengode, kollengode, South Malabar  
 95 Rao Bahadur M R Rameswami Sivan, North Gopalpuram, Cathedral, P O Madras  
 96 Mr E Vinayak Rao, Advocate, East Mada Street, Mylapore, Madras

- 97 Mr C L Narayan Sastri, Advocate, Vizagpatam  
 98 Mr K Balasubramania Iyer, "The Ashram," Luz, Mylapore, Madras  
 99 Dewan Bahadur M Balasundram Naidu, C I E, Ritherdon Road,  
 Vepery, Madras  
 100 Mr V Venkatasubbaiya, Servants of India Society, Roypetta,  
 Madras  
 101 Mr R Suryanarayan Rao, " " " "  
 102 Mr G Sivaswamy, " " " "  
 103 Mr S R Venkatraman, " " " "  
 104 Mr V M Nayanar, " " " "

## (CENTRAL PROVINCES &amp; BERAR)

- 105 Dewan Bahadur K V Brahma, C I E, M B E, Advocate, Nagpur  
 106 Mr V K Rajvade, Advocate, Nagpur  
 107 Rao Bahadur A R Bambewala, Nagpur  
 108 Mr N A Dravid M A, Craddock Town, Nagpur  
 109 Mr V G Mandpe, Dantoh, Nagpur  
 110 Mr S B Gokhale, Sitabulda Nagpur  
 111 Rao Bahadur B V Dravid, Yeotmal  
 112 Rao Bahadur R M Khare, Amroli Camp  
 113 Mr S N Bhalchandra, Advocate, Yeotmal  
 114 Mr V T Deshpande, Yeotmal (Berar)

## (PUNJAB)

- 115 Mr C L Anand, Principal, University Law College, Lahore  
 116 Lala Jagannath Agarwal, Advocate, High Court, Montgomery Road,  
 Lahore  
 117 Lala Keshao Ram Shekri, Wakil, Civil Lines, Lahore  
 118 The Hon Lala Manohar Lal, Bar at law, Fane Road, Lahore  
 119 Pandit Harditt Sharma, Servants of India Society, 17, Maclean  
 Road, Lahore

## (BEHAR AND ORISSA)

- 120 Mr L N Sahu, M A, Servants of India Society, Cuttack

## (ASSAM)

- 121 Rai Bahadur K L Barua, Shillong  
 122 Mr Chandradhar Barua, Jorhat Assam

## INVITATION FOR NEXT SESSION

Mr Nibaran Chandra Roy (Calcutta) Mr President and brother-delegates, I have very great pleasure in inviting you to hold your next session, the 22nd session of the National Liberal Federation in Calcutta next year (Applause) I cannot assure you of the same amount of liberality with which Liberals in the United Provinces have treated us during the present session. But all that I can tell you is that we shall do our utmost to make your stay comfortable and to make the sitting a success (Applause)

The invitation was accepted with acclamation

## VOTE OF THANKS TO PRESIDENT

Dr H N Kuzru

*The Hon Dr Hirday Nath Kunzru (Allahabad)* Mr President and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to move a hearty vote of thanks to our distinguished President (Applause) I am sure you will all agree with me when I say that it was our good fortune that we were able to secure for this year's session a President of his knowledge and calibre (Applause) Our gratitude to him is enhanced by the fact that he accepted our invitation at extremely short notice. Gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to dwell on the high qualifications of our President. I am sure they were dwelt upon by speakers when he was proposed to the chair. Nevertheless I cannot help saying that Dr Paranjpye applied himself to the study of public questions even when his duties were primarily educational. They were sufficiently onerous. But his patriotism compelled him to study the wider questions relating to the political development of his country. He is one of the best informed public men in India. It is his knowledge and industry that have enabled him to rise to high positions and to fill them with distinction. His grasp of public questions is shown by the address which he read out to us the other day. Whether one agrees with all that he says or not, one must recognize that he has the courage of his convictions. He thinks clearly and is not afraid of speaking out his own mind. That is a quality which we must value above others in our public men. It is a quality that ought to be found in all public men, but I am afraid that there are few public men who have the courage to express their views on political and social subjects even when they run counter to public opinion.

It is matter of gratification to us that we shall have to guide us during the coming year a President of Dr Paranjpye's knowledge breadth of views and strength of mind. The ability with which he has guided our deliberations to day has been apparent to you. I need not therefore dilate on it. He has shown both firmness and fairness in the open session as well as in the subjects committee and it is mainly his desire to harmonize different views and to face facts that enabled us to put forward resolutions which were unanimously accepted by the house. Gentlemen I need not say one word more in order to justify the proposition that I am placing before you. I am sure you will carry it by acclamation (Applause)

The Hon Mr P N Saprú.

*The Hon Mr P N Saprú* Mr President, Mr Chairman of the Reception Committee ladies and gentlemen—It is my privilege to second the vote of thanks to the President which has been moved by my distinguished friend Dr Hirday Nath Kunzru. I say a privilege because Dr Paranjpye is one of the purest, cleanest and most selfless men in the public life of this country. (Hear, hear) He has devoted his life to the service of the Motherland. After a brilliant career at Cambridge, he joined the Fergusson College on a stipend of Rs 75 a month. For years he was the respected head of that great institution. Then he distinguished himself in the political field as a member of the Bombay Legislature and for six years he was a minister in the Bombay Government. A high European official who had the privilege of serving under him once told me that Dr Paranjpye was easily the ablest minister that the Bombay Presidency had produced. He is a rationalist, a genuine Liberal who has a broad, tolerant, philosophic, rational outlook on life, and on public questions. He has delivered

a magnificent address, an address which makes us think, and that I think is a great achievement for our president (Heu, heu) The Liberal party, gentlemen, is small in numbers but I believe, and I believe earnestly, that it has a great future before it because it is a party of principled men and it is a party based on principles, it is a party based on ethics. We have difficult times ahead of us and in these difficult times we needed the guidance of a leader like Dr Paranjpye. Those of us who have seen him conduct the Subjects Committee know how accommodating he is, how conciliatory he is. He wishes to give everybody a chance. He has had to preside over a difficult time and we go back to the country a united body. If there are any differences in emphasis in our party, they only reveal that we are a vital organization. On fundamentals we are all united and we shall remain ever united on fundamentals. Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks.

*The proposition was then carried by enthusiastic acclamation*

### PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr Paranjpye, president, replying to the vote of thanks and concluding the session, said: "My Gurtu, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the resolution you have just now passed. I need hardly say that it was with some diffidence that I undertook this office at a comparatively short notice, but I was quite certain of ready cooperation from all the delegates of this Federation. I have been amply justified in my expectation."

Before I proceed to make a few remarks on our work generally I wish to convey my personal thanks for the trouble that the reception committee and the volunteers and our hosts took for my own entertainment and the entertainment of the delegates. Among those I would like to mention Mr Vishnu Nath, Mr Surendra Nath Verma, Mr Brij Narain Gurtu, Mr Mahipat Ram Nagai, Mr B. P. Mathur and Pandit Mool Chand Mahwiyi for making arrangements. (Applause) Mr Kedu Nath Gupta, captain of the volunteers and principal of the Agrawal Intermediate College, and all volunteers have to be thanked for their good work. They did their work devotedly without coming into prominence and I think every delegate thanks all these gentlemen and youngmen. It is very desirable for young men to do such service in an inconspicuous position, but that is a lesson, I am sure, which will last them all their life. Among the volunteers I must mention the daughter of our distinguished friend, Sir Yagneshwara Chintamani, Miss Mohini Chintamani. A lady volunteer is one of the innovations in the Liberal Federation and I hope at the next conference we shall also have the assistance of young ladies and that they will receive their first lesson in public life as volunteers in the Liberal Federation. (Applause) Nextly I wish to offer our most hearty thanks to Rai Bahadur Babu Bhagwati Suran Singh and Rai Bahadur Bibu Ramta Prasad Kakkar for the sumptuous tea parties that they gave us on the 27th and 28th. I believe everybody enjoyed these tea parties and we heartily offer them our most sincere thanks. Then the very unpleasant business of collecting funds has been done by Pandit Prakash Narain Gupta. Those of us who have had to work for such purpose at various times in our life knew often what a thankless, unpleasant and ungracious task it is to be going round to collect funds. Raja Maheshwar Dival Seth and Kunwar Gurus Narain are new recruits to our Liberal party and they also helped us in this very thank

personality Under the spell of power many of the Ministers have been found, if not absolutely wanting, certainly wanting to a great extent and that can only be remedied by raising the moral tone of the whole population There must be steadiness and a consistency of principles in public life You must not have principles in water tight spheres, one principle for one kind of subject, another principle for another kind of subject You love for advancement must not only be in politics, it must be also in social and industrial and all other matters and you must have the same liberal, progressive point of view and then only you would have justified your being Liberals and members of the Liberal party

We are possibly threatened with difficult times First of all, there is the communal problem and the great tension between the communities in this country There is also the threat of possible direct action The Liberals will have to cut out their path properly They might find themselves in very great difficulties When people resort to courses of action which we do not approve, in such times we may have to bear even greater opprobrium from the public But I think we must not shirk our responsibility and we must continue to be firm to the principles that we advocate

We have been told that our political salvation lies in the Charkha and the Khadi These are good things in their way, but I think that our political salvation lies among other things and not only in these We have explained the means by which our political salvation can be attained and it is this wide outlook that the Liberals should continue to preserve in the whole course of their lives We do not advocate any policy of sulking The Congress always talks of passive resistance if they find something they can't get entirely to their own satisfaction I do not think that in politics and public life this policy of sulking is really desirable What I would like to urge is, do your best, try your hardest to achieve your ends If you do not succeed, try again, but for the moment reconcile yourself to your fate It is not the first time that everybody succeeds You may have to try very often Just now, for instance, we have been told that one attempt at our making a constitution failed, therefore every similar attempt is bound to fail But history tells us that other countries have tried to work out their own constitutions for several years and several committees and commissions have set in order to hammer out a proper constitution We have suggested this time a conference composed of certain members for hammering out our constitution I do hope that you will consider that this is a sane path It is only in this manner that we shall be able to hammer out a proper constitution for ourselves Constitution making is not presumably a job which any Tom, Dick or Harry will be able to achieve It is a job requiring knowledge, experience and firmness as well as sanity and a large amount of work is required I hope that the suggestion that we have made to constitute a committee by election from various sources will appeal to other political bodies in this country I know that we shall not probably find a place in it or, if at all, we may find a place for only one or two of us But it does not matter whether we are personally on that committee or not But we know that the only successful way of achieving our end for framing a constitution according to our desires is by some such method, not by getting 200 million people to vote for a constituent assembly They do not know what they are voting for That is not the way in which constitutions are made and we do not wish to



# National Liberal Federation of India

## TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

### RESOLUTIONS

#### The Liberal Party's Losses

- (a) The National Liberal Federation of India records with sorrow the death of Kumar Rajendra Singh of Lucknow, a former Minister in the U P Government who was a prominent member of the Liberal Party and rendered meritorious services to the country. The Federation offers its deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.
- (b) The Federation records with sorrow the deaths of Mr A V Patwardhan a foundation member of the Servants of India Society, who specially interested himself in the question of Indian states, Sir Hormosji Dinshaw who was a member of the party ever since its foundation and a great philanthropist, Mr S S Persha a member of the Telugu community of Bombay, and Dr Sir Nuserwanji H Choksey of Bombay, all of whom were staunch Liberals and rendered valued services to the country. The Federation offers its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

#### International War

The Federation strongly condemns the policy of aggression followed by the totalitarian states against smaller or weaker states and sympathizes with the victims. The Federation considers that Britain and France are fighting Germany in the cause of democracy and freedom and feels that Indian sympathies are on the side of democratic nations and that the whole of India wishes that their efforts will be crowned with success.

The Federation appeals to all Indians to give their support to the cause for which the democracies are fighting.

The Federation is convinced that the larger interests of India are bound up with the defeat of Nazism and the success of the cause of democracy and freedom. At the same time in order to enable India to put forth its wholehearted support the imagination of the people should be captured by a change in the attitude of the British Government regarding the future of India.

#### Viceroy's Statement

The National Liberal Federation of India having fully considered the statement issued by His Excellency the Viceroy and subsequent official statements, both in England and India is strongly of opinion that they are quite unsatisfactory inasmuch as they

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- (a) do not go beyond the position taken up in 1917 and imply the postponement of the advent of Dominion Status to an indefinite and distant future and do not envisage its achievement within a definite period in the near future ;
- (b) leave the centre irresponsible as it is at present ,
- (c) give to the minority communities a virtual veto on future constitutional progress ,
- (d) make the admission of a larger Indian element into the Viceroy's Executive Council conditional on the settlement of the communal problem in the provinces, although this was not a condition precedent to the establishment of Federation under the Government of India Act, 1935 ,
- (e) ignore the urgent need for the rapid nationalization of the defence forces in all their branches

(2) The Consultative Committee as proposed by the Viceroy, the object of which was to win Indian support in the prosecution of war, could be no substitute for responsibility at the centre and therefore failed to appeal to the people

### **Dominion Status**

This Federation strongly urges (1) that the Government of India Act of 1935 should be so amended

- (a) as to provide for the establishment of complete responsible government in the provinces and on a federal basis at the centre so that India may automatically become a Dominion within the meaning of the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and of the Statute of Westminster on the conclusion of the war , and
- (b) as to secure to the subjects of States, the right of election of State representatives

(2) That in the meanwhile immediate steps should be taken to nationalize the army so as to enable India to shoulder the responsibility of Dominion Status

### **Framing of Future Constitution for India**

The Liberal Federation is strongly of opinion that the future constitution of India should be framed by Indians themselves but considers that the idea of the proposed constituent assembly is impracticable and is likely to retard our progress

the Federation therefore suggests that a conference be convened in India by His Majesty's Government for framing the constitution and that it should be composed of

- (1) the representatives of elected members of Provincial and Central Legislatures in British India elected on the basis of proportional representation,
- (2) the representatives of elected members of legislatures of Indian States,

(3) the rulers of major States or their ministers invited by the Viceroy and the representatives of other Princes elected by the Chamber of Princes,

(4) representatives elected by landholders' associations, associations representing trade and commerce and associations representing agricultural and industrial labour,

and (5) a certain number of the members of the Conference to be nominated by the Viceroy to represent such interests and views as may otherwise go unrepresented

### Defence

1 The National Liberal Federation strongly protests against the decision of His Majesty's Government (a) to give an extended meaning to Indian defence by making India share without her consent in the responsibility of defending Singapore and Egypt although no such responsibility has been laid on the shoulders of any of the Dominions vitally interested in the defence of these places, (b) to treat one tenth of the army in India virtually as an Imperial Reserve for utilization outside India in defence of British possessions between Egypt and Singapore, and (c) to make India hable for the payment of the maintenance charges of this reserve even when it is employed in defence of these possessions

2 In spite of the heavy burden of military expenditure borne by the country since the inception of the British rule, the Government have utterly failed in their duty to equip the country adequately for defensive purposes. The Federation reiterates its demand for (a) the rapid nationalization of the defence forces of India involving the replacement of British troops and the Royal Air Force by Indian land and air forces and the substitution of Indian for European officers in the army, navy and air forces of the country, (b) the redistribution of the existing defence expenditure so as to provide more money for the rapid development of the Indian air force, the organization of defence against air raids which has been rendered essential by the changed international situation, the Federation regretting that no steps have been taken in this direction and that the measures taken to train Indian pilots are extremely inadequate specially as compared with those taken in some of the Dominions (c) the removal of provincial and class restrictions regarding recruitment to the army (d) a wide expansion, wherever possible on a compulsory basis, of the University Training Corps and the selection of cadets from the corps for admission to the Indian Military Academy, (e) the introduction of military drill and the establishment of cadet corps in schools in accordance with the recommendations of the Shea Committee, (f) a much wider extension of the Indian territorial force and (g) the taking of all necessary steps to make the people of this country more self reliant in the matter of defence and to make India self sufficient so far as possible in regard to the production of war materials

### Separation of the Executive from the Judiciary

The National Liberal Federation places on record its great disappointment at and protest against the manner in which provincial Governments

- (a) do not go beyond the position taken up in 1917 and imply the postponement of the advent of Dominion Status to an indefinite and distant future and do not envisage its achievement within a definite period in the near future ,
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### Separation of the Executive from the Judiciary

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including Congress Ministries have failed to carry out separation of the executive from the judiciary

It considers the reform urgently necessary and urges that comprehensive schemes separating the two functions be carried into effect as early as possible

### **Reform in the Indian States**

- (a) The National Liberal Federation of India welcomes the steps taken by some Indian Princes to associate their subjects with the administration of their states
- (b) The Federation reaffirms its complete sympathy with the natural and legitimate aspirations of the people of Indian states for civil and political liberties
- (c) The Federation trusts that the rulers of states will realize in their own interest that with the working of responsible government in the provinces it is no longer possible for them to continue to administer their states on the existing lines. The Federation therefore urges the rulers to concede to their subjects without any further delay the right of security of person and property, liberty of speech and of the press, freedom of association, an independent judiciary and to initiate adequate measures for the establishment of responsible government

### **Rural Economic Development**

The National Liberal Federation advocates measures to secure

- (i) the relief of agricultural indebtedness and the adoption of measures to check further fragmentation and facilitate the consolidation of agricultural holdings
- (ii) the embodiment in legislative enactments of the main principles of land revenue assessment in provinces where this has not been done
- (iii) substantial aid in the development of industries big and small alike
- (iv) a fiscal and monetary policy wholly in the interests of the country
- (v) legislation for the more adequate protection of the labouring classes both in urban and rural areas
- (vi) the early introduction of free and compulsory elementary education for both boys and girls
- (vii) adequate provision for medical relief and the promotion of public health particularly in rural areas

### **Indians Overseas**

*Ceylon* —1 The National Liberal Federation strongly protests against the Ceylon Government's policy of discrimination against Indians and their decision

- (i) to dismiss and repatriate Indians employed in Government departments since April 1, 1934,

- (b) to retrench Indian employees of more than five but less than ten years of service on a racial basis if they do not voluntarily retire by the end of 1939

2 The Federation fully supports the decision of the Government of India to prohibit the emigration of Indian labour to Ceylon and urges it to take necessary measures to secure justice to the Indian community

*South Africa*—This Federation expresses its indignation and resentment at the continued ill treatment of Indians in South Africa and the policy of segregation embodied in the Asiatic Land and Trading Act although there was no proof that Indians were violating any of the existing statutes, or were resorting to illegal practices and although the Union Government have undertaken under the Cape Town Agreement to treat the Indian community as an integral part of the population of the Union of South Africa and to take steps to raise their position

*Fiji*—This Federation draws the attention of the Government of India to the grievances of the Indians of Fiji as stated in the resolution passed at the All Fiji Indian Conference in November, 1938, and urges it to press His Majesty's Government to agree to the appointment of an Agent to the Government of India in Fiji which in the opinion of this Federation, is necessary to develop better understanding between the Government of India and the Government of Fiji and to enhance the status of the Indian community. The war should not be allowed to stand in the way of the satisfaction of this demand which ought to have been agreed to, long ago, by His Majesty's Government

*Malaya*—The Liberal Federation appreciates the action taken by the Government of India in stopping assisted emigration to Malaya as a protest against the reduction of the wages of Indian labourers employed on plantations by the planters and urges it to prohibit all emigration of labour, whether assisted or unassisted, as has been done in the case of Ceylon, in order to protect the rights of Indian labour

The Federation further impresses on the Government of India the need for taking steps to secure the rights of the Indian community in Malaya both in order to vindicate Indian self respect and to raise the status of India

### **Indian Consular Service**

- (a) In the interests of safeguarding the rights of Indians living in other parts of the British Empire as well as in foreign countries, the National Liberal Federation of India is of opinion that an Indian Consular Service should be developed on the lines adopted by the Dominions
- (b) Pending the development of such a Consular Service, the Federation urges the admission of Indians into the British Diplomatic and Consular Corps from which Indians have been so far scrupulously excluded

### **War and Industrial Development**

The National Liberal Federation urges the Government of India to take steps to encourage and develop all such industries as can be expanded or established on a sound basis during the war or are necessary in the larger interests of the country